

# Executive Summary

## This is an Important Place...

This section summarizes the findings and recommendations of this planning effort. The contents of Section 1 include:

**Town of Kansas-** reviews the heritage and the natural and man-made resources...

**Purpose and Scope of the Plan-** highlights the elements of the Plan...

**Implementation Approach and Costs and Benefits-** reviews recommended actions and their benefits

**Action Agenda-** identifies initial commitments

Additional detail on each topic is provided in the subsequent sections of the Plan.

## Town of Kansas

**T**he Town of Kansas lies at the heart of the Westward expansion movement that occurred in the years following the Louisiana Purchase and the initial exploration, by Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery, of this grand addition to the United States of America.

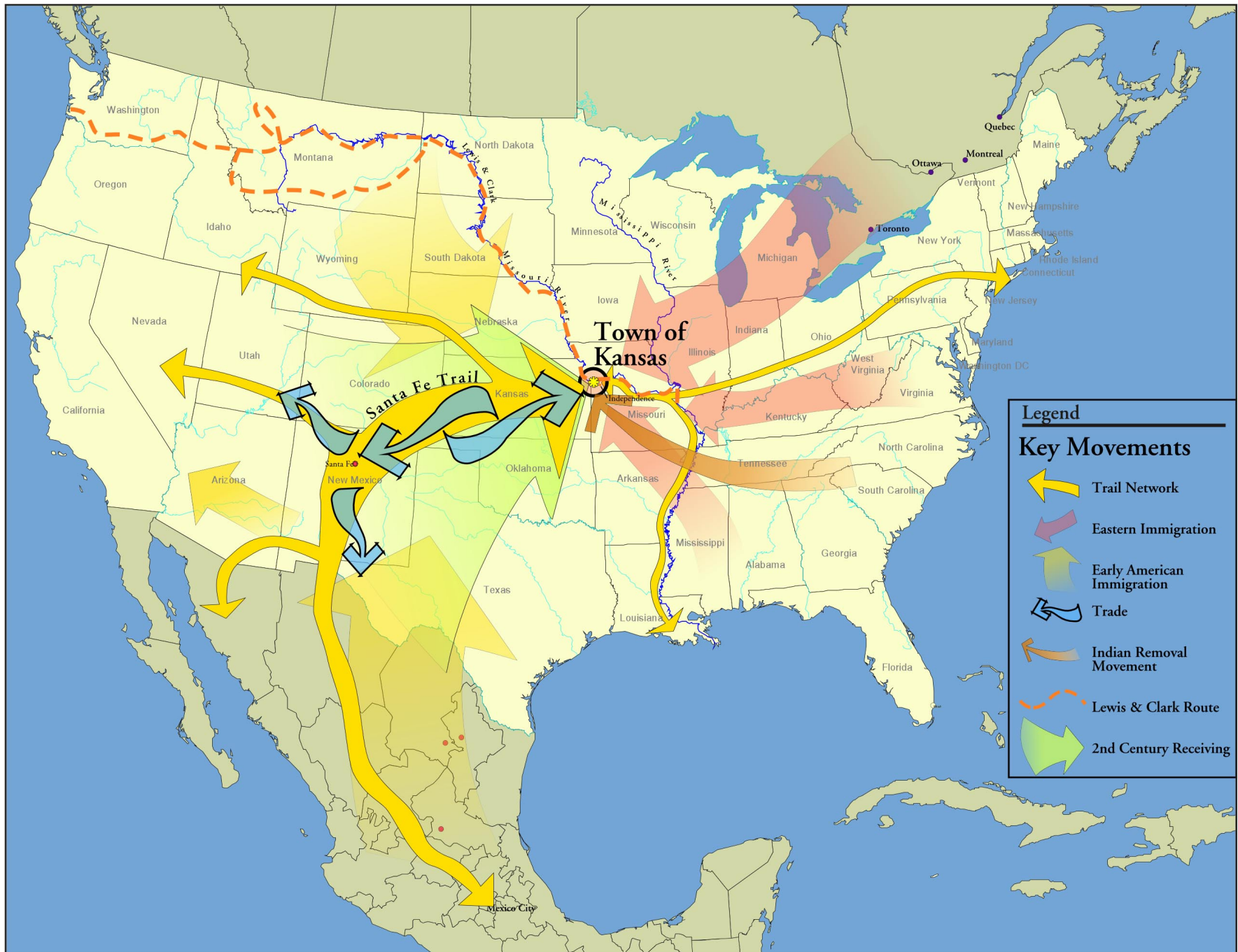
Native Americans had significant settlements in the area. Strategically sited near the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, this site was an important early fur trading center, and in the 1830's became a principal jumping off point for traders and settlers heading West, first along the Santa Fe Trail and then along the California and Oregon Trails. For the earliest traders, the town founders, and for those who came later to set up shops, businesses and hotels, there was great profit here!

Town of Kansas became a memorable place for those travelling through. People and goods were transferred from water to land transport here, but this site, with its ledges and slopes, was not an easy disembarkation point. They had to claw their way up from the riverbank, up the steep bluff and onto the prairie.



Early on, a lively place for people settling Town of Kansas, as well as those travelling west.

**Figure 1: National Context Map**





The Missouri River Basin was home to numerous Native American tribes.

For the thousands of Easterners, European immigrants and freed slaves, who tossed aside their past in quest of a better life 'out west', Town of Kansas became a portal to opportunity, and the pursuit of happiness (**Figure 1: National Context Map**).

Town of Kansas was part of an urban experiment which repeated itself many times over along the banks of the Missouri, Mississippi and Kansas Rivers, where new cities arose. While the forces of nature and the insatiable will of man conspired to make this particular place short-lived as a town, it gave birth to a great city. The original platted street grid, with six numbered streets, quickly marched down the road southward to Westport. Today the grid extends more than 150 blocks to the south and north.

Town of Kansas witnessed, and was changed by, important social forces that sculpted this nation and made us who we are today. From the raucous frontier outpost, a civilized town emerged, with shops, hotels, newspapers and a City government and County Court system. Town of Kansas lay on the very edge of the Indian Territories, established by the Indian Relocation Act of the 1830's. Town of Kansas took center stage in the antislavery movement leading up to the Civil War.

As the lands to the west were settled, livestock grains and others goods flowed eastward through this portal to markets back East and abroad. The same economic forces that created Town of Kansas, oversaw her decline as technology advanced. Methods of transportation changed and places further south attained locational advantage. Shortly after the Civil War, the railroad supplanted both the steamboat and the wagon train. In the twentieth century, the car and truck have further accelerated this area's decline and isolated it from both its source, the river, and its offspring, the city that is Kansas City.

## Goals of the Plan

**T**he purpose of this effort is to develop a Master Plan for the preservation, discovery, interpretation and development of a historic core area, hereafter designated 'Town of Kansas' and its adjacent related venues throughout the surrounding River Market Area, in accord with the following guiding principles:

**Respect the archaeological site, but make it accessible-** Cherish it! Protect it, but use it!

**Expand the knowledge of this place-** through institutional partnerships.

**Create a living archaeological site-** Utilize the setting, location, adjacencies and proposed site work as an innovative learning lab.

**Allow visitors a role-** Provide visitors, residents and school groups various ways to contribute.

**Tell the many stories that can be uniquely presented on this site in exciting ways:** the history of the Town of Kansas and the stories of her inhabitants and also the development of Kansas City, the role that the lower Missouri River Valley has had in opening up and serving our American West as well as tell of the diverse ethnic and cultural forces that worked together to realize the new comers' dreams.

**Provide a catalyst for Second Street Area Redevelopment-** enhance the image of the entire area and provide a vital neighborhood amenity.



The River brought many early settlers to Town of Kansas

**Reach for the River Market Area and the City-** This Plan should coordinate closely with development of the proposed Kansas City Heritage Corridor.

**Reach for the River-** The Missouri River is the 'raison d'être' for Town of Kansas and Kansas City... enhance the ability of the City to realize the full potential of its river beginnings.

**Embrace and accept the railroads as important site elements-** Kansas City started because of its strategic river location, but the railroads fueled its development. The tracks, bridges, sidings, and most of all the rumble and roar of passing trains tell an equally important part of the Kansas City Story, its continuing connection to the Nation.



## Scope of the Plan

The dream of developing an ‘urban archaeological park’ in the area between the bluff and the KC Terminal railroad tracks has been advocated by the Kansas City preservation and planning community for nearly a decade. The idea has taken root to the extent that adjacent property owners have taken up the cause, supporting the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to implement parts of this plan.

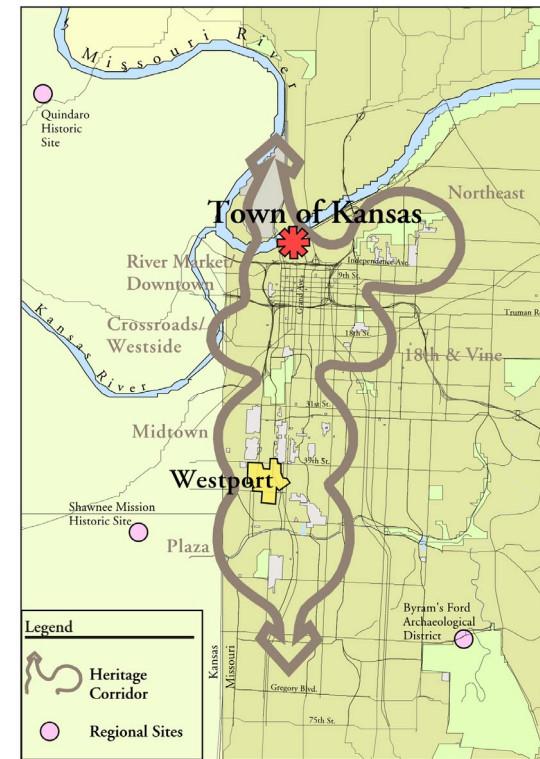
This study, funded by the City of Kansas City, began in early September 1999 with a series of input and review sessions with designated planning and technical review committees made up of abutters, potential cooperators, key stakeholders, preservation and education interests. Over the course of the study, project principles, program components, and alternative concepts were developed and presented to test the ‘attitudes and appetites’ of key individuals and entities responsible for implementation of the Plan. As highlighted in **Figure 2: Key Town of Kansas Boundaries**, the plan recognizes several programmatic areas with different levels of action and intervention, including:

### 1. Actions to Preserve the Resource

This master plan calls for a ‘gated’ core archaeological site (with hours of operation to be determined). Access is controlled via Wyandotte, Delaware and Mains Streets, with additional access through the ‘Bluff House’ Visitor Center and possibly from the pedestrian bridge. Clearing, maintaining and using the site more actively will be key to reducing theft and vandalism.

Other recommendations call for more vigilant controls to protect outlying resources within the River Market Area, including project design review and approval at key locations. While known archaeological remains exist within the river and the bluffs, significant evidence of 19th century activities relating to Town of Kansas may exist elsewhere. Many standing structures located within the River Market Area were constructed during the late 1800’s while evidence of earlier buildings may be uncovered beneath parking lots or newer structures.

The Plan also endorses development of the Kansas City Heritage Corridor to further raise awareness of the value of the connection of Town of Kansas to its region.



The City's proposed Heritage Corridor links important places and stories.

# Yearning

# Succeeding

# Adapting

6

## 2. Programs to Learn More about Town of Kansas

The Plan's research and education program outlines a multi-year research design that includes initial platform studies and documentary research: archaeological field investigations; and assessment, curation and material collections storage.

Key research topics include: the intersection of Native Americans and Europeans; the river and the land; the early town; business and trade in the Town of Kansas and beyond; race; the Civil War; and the Territory.

This Plan considers the needs for support services, collection services and storage and staffing implications. The Plan raises the potential for centralization of archival materials to an on-site Research Institute.

## 3. A Set of Interpretive Themes and an Exhibit Strategy

The primary interpretive goal is to engage visitors in the science and process of discovery, the history of this place and its relevance to their lives today.

People who came to Town of Kansas, whether settling or passing through, were pursuing a better life for themselves and their loved ones. This tenet of American philosophy — “the pursuit of happiness” — draws forth the three major interpretive themes of Town of Kansas: **Yearning, Succeeding, Adapting**, and it is on these themes that the interpretive plan is built.

The Interpretive Plan provides many ways for the visitors to engage the site, inviting each to become an active participant in hands-on exhibits, public programs and presentations. Rather than being passive receptors of information, visitors will have the opportunity to make choices, manipulate the learning environment, share their opinions and establish their own pace.

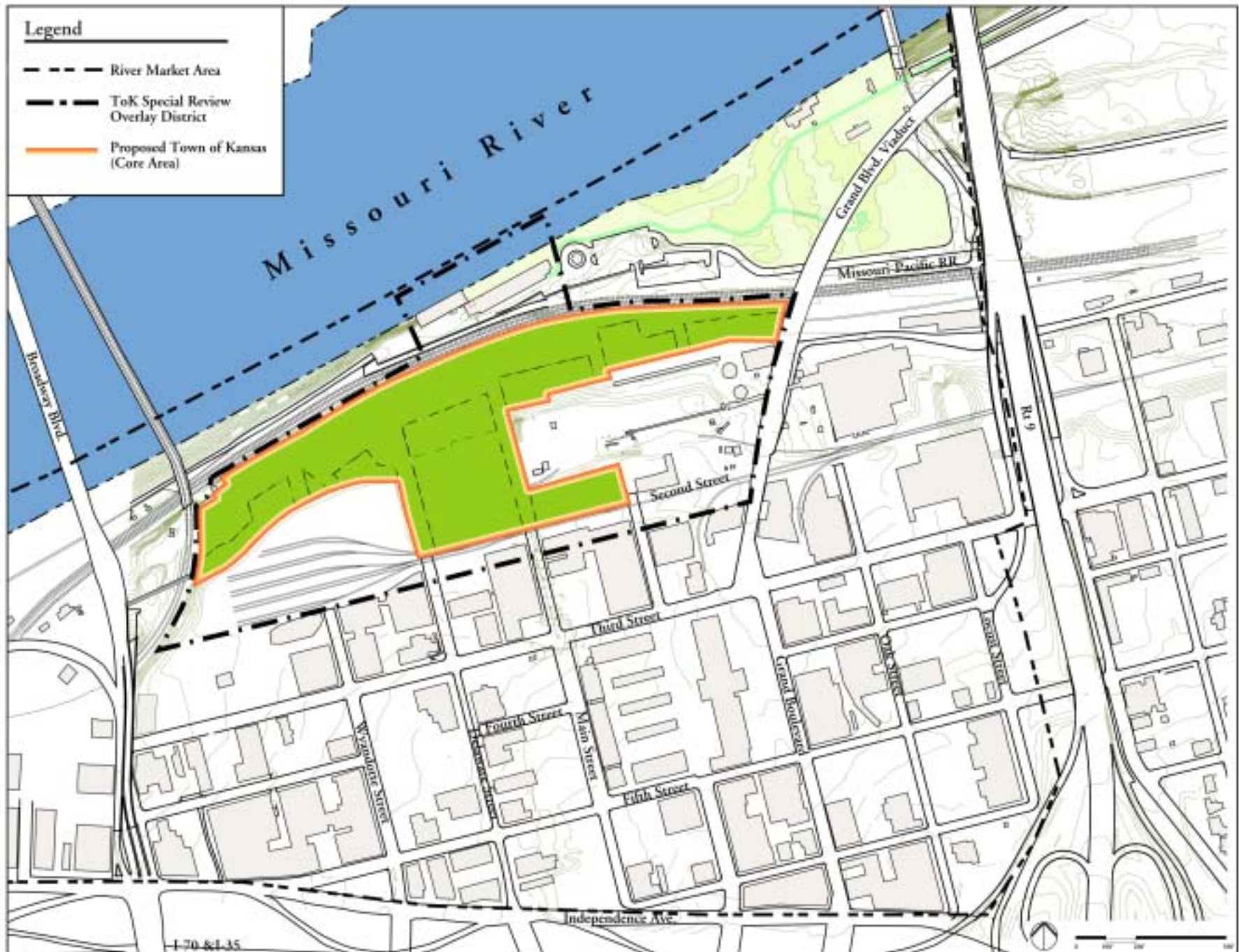
The plan anticipates a wide range of interests and learning styles among the diverse visitors we hope to attract, and describes a variety of media to bring the site and its story to life.

Appendix 1 of this report details what we will interpret about Town of Kansas, and how this can be accomplished.



German etching, c. 1853. This image is believed to have been based on a daguerreotype made around 1848. Missouri Valley Room, K.C. Public Library.

**Figure 2: Key Town of Kansas Boundaries**



#### 4. Connected Settings and Activities

The Plan calls for a core area, shown in **Figure 3: Elements of the Town of Kansas Plan**. In this figure, Town of Kansas is planned as a discrete site, with controlled access to the archaeological setting at the foot of the bluff. On top of the Bluff, a major Entry Plaza, just west of Main Street, offers ready access to “Bluff House”, the main visitor center orientation/interpretive venue; the proposed pedestrian bridge to the riverfront; the potential ‘research/education center; a ‘top of bluff’ interpretive trail westward, on the abandoned KC Southern right-of-way, toward the Hannibal Bridge and, via controlled access, onto the principal archaeological area.

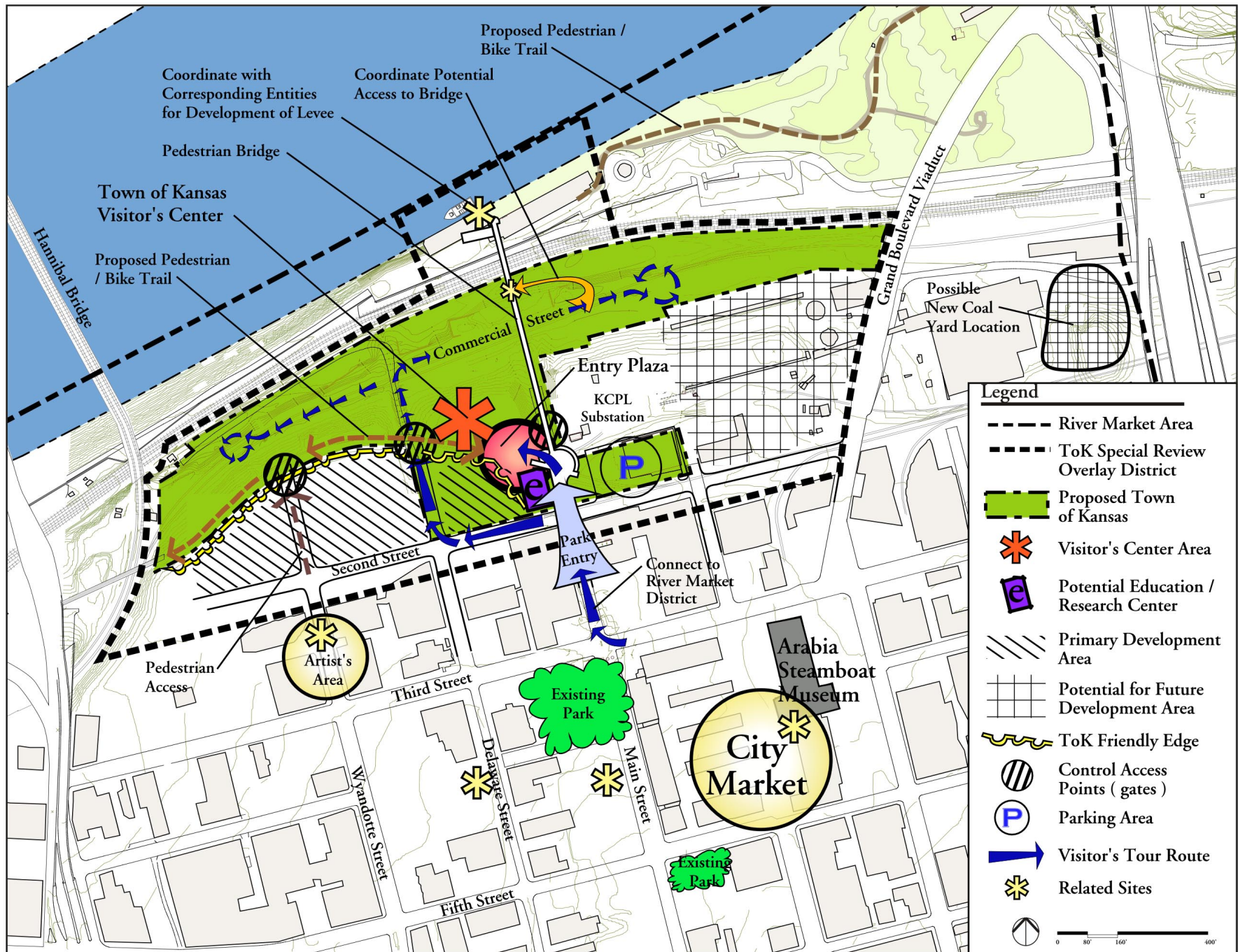
Within the restricted archaeological area, controlled pathways lead the visitor to a circulation spine along the former Commercial Street/KC Terminal right-of-way with limited access to a series of interpretive settings and/or ongoing archaeological digs.

The Plan recognizes that the stories of Town of Kansas extends out into the River Market Area and interpretive elements should be developed at related sites. These include settings along Main and Delaware, as well as potentially a major venue along the ‘Levee’, on the abandoned wharf slab at the river’s edge. Additionally, programs should be coordinated with key related attractions in the area including the Arabia Museum and the City Market. When established, Town of Kansas will be an important stop within the Kansas City Heritage Corridor.

As both a protective and possible enhancement measure, a Town of Kansas Special Review Overlay District is proposed for areas directly abutting Town of Kansas.



**Figure 3: Elements of the Town of Kansas Plan**



## Realizing the Plan

**T**he key to successful implementation of this Plan is to continue to build consensus and support for the Plan. Important relationships have been developed and groups are already working together toward this end.

### Implementation Approach

**The Plan must be inclusive:** Stakeholders, (particularly the railroads, COE, Port Authority, utility providers), historic and preservation groups and the greater Kansas City community have much to offer and much to gain.

**The participation of the National Park Service and the Missouri Division of State Parks is welcome:** These institutions can assist in both additional funding and national recognition. A partnership with the National Park Service can put Town of Kansas on the national map.

**The right management entity must be on board early:** A crucial early step is to find the people and/or organizations with the ability and the mission to carry forth the plan. This would preferably be an existing, and highly energized organization and group of organizations with the interest and appetite for this endeavor.

**An integrated public and private policy is essential:** Interest in building for this concept and momentum must be maintained.

The following sections describe a recommended approach to the site. Preliminary cost estimates have been developed for a “Baseline” plan.

If the Republic Fiber Co. site is acquired for redevelopment, (a recommendation of this study), this ‘Baseline’ scheme can be quickly realized. If the interest and the means are there to expand the research and education components, they can also be incorporated in the redevelopment of that site in the next phase of planning and development.



Grading for the Nelson Hotel, northeast corner of 2nd and Main Street, June 1868. In 1872, this hotel was converted to the first County Courthouse. Native Sons Collection, Western Historical Manuscripts, UMKC.



## Costs

**Capital Costs:** The cost of the base Plan is estimated to be nearly \$16 million. If additional uses are added, this number could rise dramatically to more than \$33 million, depending upon the extent of additional permanent research and education center facilities.

**Operating Costs:** The Baseline program, taking account of staff salaries, operating costs, program development costs, and projected revenues for the core program, ranges from an opening year deficit of \$246,000 to a potential surplus of an equivalent amount when the operation has reached an attendance of 150,000 per year. Operating costs for the Expanded Plan might involve an existing early 20<sup>th</sup> century building at the north-



Looking south from the Bluff toward Downtown.

west corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets depending on 1) whether or not it is needed for expanded Town of Kansas research and education related uses and 2) if not, whether it should be recycled or torn down as part of an expanded private redevelopment of this site. For example, beyond the “baseline” program set forth above, the master plan can accommodate several far more ambitious programs and facilities. One potential supplemental facility, with precedent in other locations, would be a major center for research and scholarship, created in cooperation with an academic institution or entity. Such a facility might be supportable if additional archaeology reveals great depth of resources on-site, sufficient to support significant scholar-

ship and field study in the issues of frontier town development.

Another potential future development would be a major educational center, catering to primary and/or secondary school students from within the region and, possibly offering state-wide discovery experiences to learn about early regional history as part of larger curriculum efforts. The Tsongas Educational Center, in Lowell, Massachusetts, is an interesting example where creative learning experiences have been designed to serve students who spend several days in residency and benefit from the resource of a National Historical Park site.

Advertisement for the J.&P. Shannon's Dry Goods Store from the Kansas City Enterprise, 1856. Missouri Valley Room, K.C. Public Library.

J. & P. SHANNON,  
IMPORTERS AND WHOLESALE DEALERS IN  
FRENCH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN  
**DRY GOODS**  
Carpets, Oil Cloths, Rugs, Mats,  
Indian and Mexican Goods, Clothing and Outfit-  
ting Goods,  
**BOOTS, SHOES, HATS, CAPS AND FURS,**  
STRAW GOODS AND MILLINERY,  
Corner Main and Front Streets,  
KANSAS CITY, MO.

## Benefits

*The benefits to the City, its citizens, workers and visitors will be great...*

This Plan will aid Kansas City in returning a major piece of her lost heritage to her citizens. It can reconnect the City with its river and its river origins, even as the City prepares for its 150th anniversary. It provides a comprehensive, heritage base framework for public improvements in this part of the City. Given the goals of preservation, education and revitalization catalyst, implementation of this plan should have high priority on the City's reinvestment agenda.

Creating a comprehensive heritage-based plan at Town of Kansas will further encourage high quality private development on the Bluff, at the Levee and throughout the River Market Area.

As the jumping off point for the Kansas City Heritage Corridor, this Plan offers a highly imageable and accessible venue for orienting Visitors to the city.

## Funding Strategy

It is anticipated that both capital and operational costs will require a combination of city, state and federal funding as well as foundation and other charitable donations. Capital funding should be available from the City, from the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan that has been approved for the River Market Area, TIF revenues from adjacent related Bluff development, from the Public Improvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) on an annual basis from the City's general fund and through specific grants for development and/or programs for the Town of Kansas facility. Supplemental funding may be available from a variety of State and Federal Programs to support preservation, historic, environmental, educational, and economic development goals of the plan.



# Action Agenda

Four significant initiatives frame the Early Action Agenda:

- Development of the Interpretive Plan for the Pedestrian Bridge
- Final Programming and design of an 'Early Action' project to clean up, secure and provide limited access and modest interpretive exhibits for visitors to one or more of the archaeological fields
- Continued refinement of the Implementation Plan
- Final Programming and design of Bluff House Area, including a joint development strategy, and direction on the extent of research and education facilities required

In conclusion, the timing is good and the resource is extraordinary, but it is paramount to build on this momentum, particularly in light of the other initiatives in the area that this Plan will complement so well.

# 2 Defining Town of Kansas

**T**he story of Town of Kansas is quintessentially American: a story of ambition, opportunity, failure, sacrifice, and success. The earliest settlers, who came from a variety of backgrounds, all yearned for something better - a better life, a better business opportunity, a better land with room to grow. Together, their desires and hard work succeeded in creating a small river front town that over decades developed into a major metropolitan center.

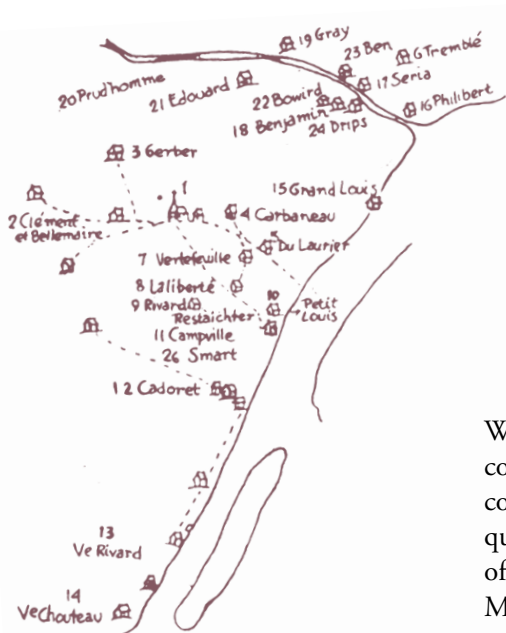
## A Brief Look Back

### **In the Beginning . . . the French Connection**

Decades before the first warehouse or hotel was built in the Town of Kansas, the area around the junction of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers was home to the voyageurs and the coureurs de bois who came to trap and trade with the Indians. Many were French Canadians or Creoles from French Louisiana and most were hardy, rough settlers who found a contented life with their Indian wives. But among them was aristocrat named Francois Gesseau

Chouteau, a young 24 year old man whose father and grandfather were prominent citizens of Illinois and whose family fortune was built on fur-trading. In 1821, the same year Missouri was admitted to the Union, Francois traveled up the river from St. Louis and established a trading post. It was a beginning - for European settlement, for trade and commerce, for Western expansion and Indian removal, and for an emerging town.

An English version of an 1840 map drawn by Father Nicholas Point, S.J., showing the location of the 26 Catholic families in early Kansas City. Although Point labeled his drawing "Plan de Westport", he was actually drawing Westport Landing, the early riverfront settlement that became Kansas City. Native Sons Archives, Western Historical Manuscripts, UMKC.



*"Since my arrival in this place, I have had much work to do with the savages, I have given (things) on credit to the greater part of the village of the kans, they are now very well outfitted to make a good hunt, which I very much hope. I have paid the rest of the annuities to the wias and pianguicha, according to the letters that Mr. Menard wrote to the chiefs of those bands. The chief of the peorias was not here, I will pay him upon his arrival. He went with Captain Vashon to the River of the Arkansas."*

**(Francois Chouteau, September 24, 1829. From a letter to his brother Pierre)**



Despite his heritage and major accomplishments in the fur trading business, no known portrait of Francois Chouteau was made. As shown in this photo of a member of the Chouteau family, Francois was also a true aristocrat.

In the early decades of the 1800s, the trading post served as a central location where goods could be shipped up river from St. Louis and where skins could be sent down river from other western posts. Historians argue that the placement of Chouteau's trading post was strategic; it would bring independent traders under the thumb of the Berthold, Chouteau & Pratte fur trading company while giving the company access to the developing Santa Fe trade. Geography also played a critical part in the placement of the trading post. The wide, muddy, and sometimes treacherous Missouri River could be navigated, allowing keelboats, flatboats and later, steamboats, to transport the goods in both directions.

Whether it was strategy, geography, or combination of the two, the fur trading company was successful and led to the quiet emergence of a town. The 1840 map of "West Port" (a settlement along the Missouri River, this drawing is actually the earliest rendering of the Town of Kansas), drawn by Fr. Nicholas Point, depicts the numerous homes of French families as well as the stores of Thomas Smart and A.B. Canville, both Indian traders and trappers who moved from the mountains to join the French community. Early town records place these stores at approximately Main Street and the Levee and describe their merchandise as items bound for the Santa Fe trade. Steamboat landings were also entering the picture. A waybill for the steamboat Otto, dated March 23, 1833 documents that Chouteau shipped 240 packs of skins from his warehouse. The steamboat Yellow Stone is also recorded as landing at Chouteau's warehouse in the same year. By 1834, William Bent and St. Vain, two Santa Fe merchants, had begun landing their goods at Chouteau's warehouse.

*"This insignificant post could well become, in the eyes of God, a place of considerable importance, for West Port was truly the gateway to the West. This was the place where expeditions were assembled to depart for Mexico, California, and the Rocky Mountains."*

**(Father Nicholas Point, S.J. 1840).**

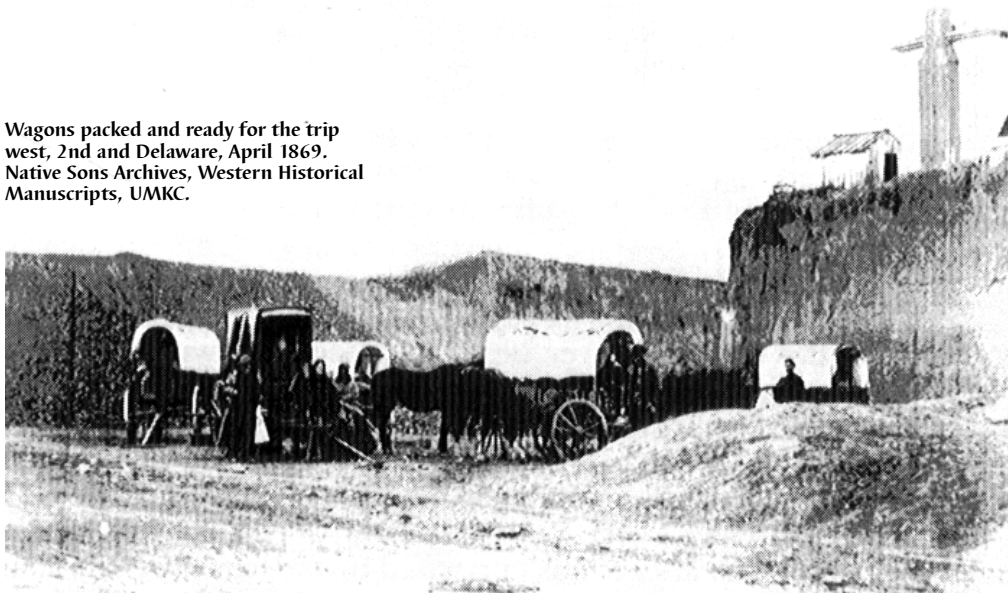
## **Westward Movement: 1820s - 1840s**

Beyond Chouteau's trading post, there were significant events that directly affected the emerging town. The United States was growing and pushing its boundaries further west. During the 1820s and 1830s a series of treaties and land cessions with eastern tribes made new land available for settlement while the Indians were relocated to Indian territory in present-day Kansas. In 1825 the Osage tribe

ceded its land in western Missouri and also moved to new territory. With the emigrant tribes came missionaries; and the one who had the greatest impact on the birth of the Town of Kansas was Issac McCoy and his son John Calvin.

In 1833, with an eye on the buying power of the emigrant Indians with their government annuities and the Santa Fe traders, the younger McCoy decided to open a store. He selected a place along the Santa Fe trade route, between Independence, the starting point, and Council Grove, the first stopping point in Indian territory. His store actually became the new town of Westport. If McCoy was anything, he was a good businessman. To stock his store with supplies, he encouraged steamboats to unload at Chouteau's warehouse landing and then proceeded to transport the merchandise four miles southwest to Westport.

Wagons packed and ready for the trip west, 2nd and Delaware, April 1869.  
Native Sons Archives, Western Historical Manuscripts, UMKC.





Within a short time, Westport became the preferred place to outfit a wagon for overland travel. For overland travelers, leaving from Westport instead of Independence reduced the trip by about 12 miles and avoided a dangerous crossing at the Blue River.

But as Westport was growing and prospering, so was the landing point along the Missouri River. Already outfitted with warehouses associated with the Indian trade, new businesses were added in the 1840s. Ironically, it is John McCoy who history credits with the founding of the Town of Kansas. McCoy was one of 14 men identified as the Town Company, a group quickly formed to purchase prized river front land from the estate of French Canadian Gabriel Prudhomme. Skilled in surveying techniques, McCoy laid out a plat for the new town in 1839 and attempts were made to sell the lots. (See Figure 4: Historic Development Patterns)

*"The town contains four immense warehouses, several grist and saw mills; blacksmith and wagon maker's shops; (and) grocery and provision stores. In the immediate vicinity are well stocked farms, from which every desirable variety of the best stock, as well as produce, can be obtained at prices as low as in any other part of Western Missouri. Wagons, mules, cattle, ponies, harness, grain, provisions, groceries - everything, in fact, necessary to the trip and the comfort of the immigrants, can be obtained at Westport as well as at Kansas."*

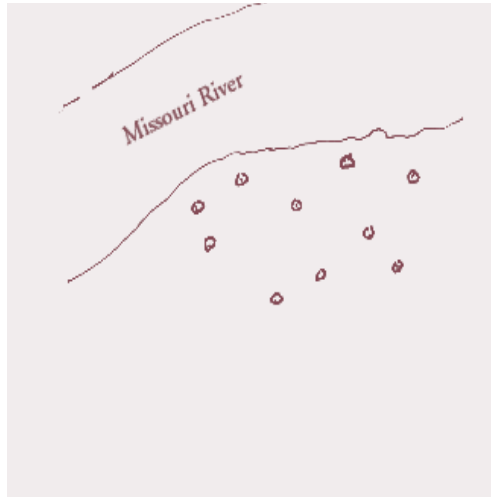
**(Liberty Tribune November 5, 1847).**



Gillis House Hotel and levee between Wyandotte and Delaware, 1867.  
Native Sons Archives, Western Historical Manuscripts, UMKC.

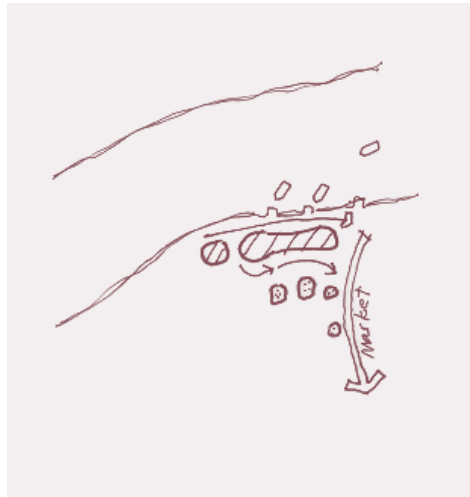
## Figure 4: Historic Development Patterns

1820-1840



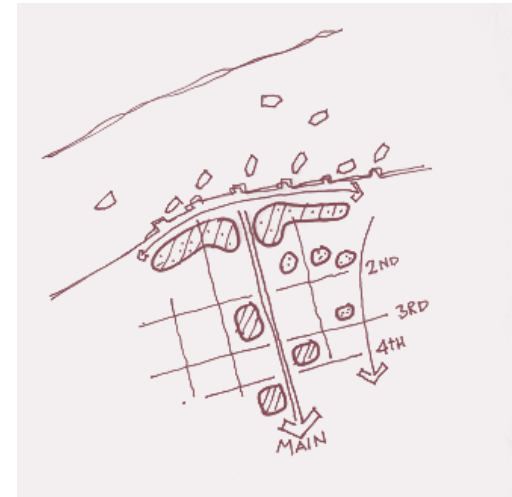
**Beginnings**

circa 1840's



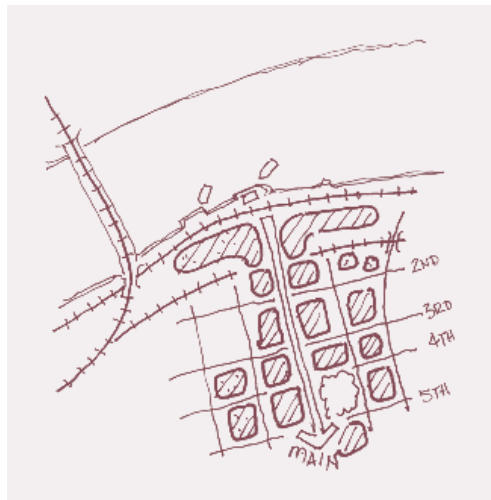
**Westport Landing**

Late 1850's



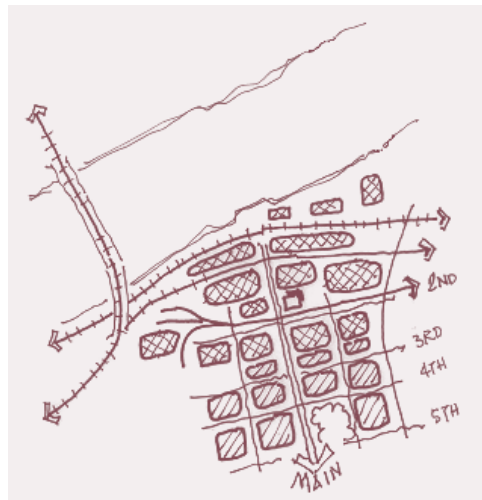
**Steamboats & Wagon Trains**

Post Civil War



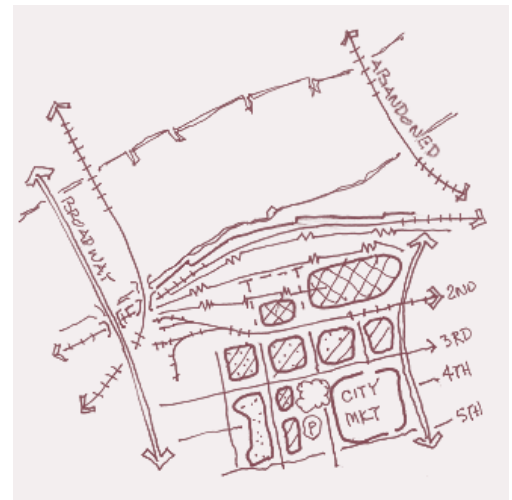
**Coming of the Railroads**

circa 1890's



**Transition to Industrial Use**

20th Century



**Abandonment & Utility Corridors**

*"Sometimes there were as many as a dozen steamers at the wharf during the day from above and below. I have seen as many as 5000 tons of merchandise stored on the Levee covered with tarpaulins because no room could be found in the warehouses. There were at least three other large concerns besides ours. We often had eight or ten trains loading at this time, and this would continue as long as daylight lasted. This with a continual discharge of freight from steamboats made the Levee look like a very busy place."*

(William H. Chick 1916).



A lithograph of the Kansas City riverfront from the mid 1850s. This may have been printed in Boston to possibly encourage settlement of the area by antislavery immigrants.

But troubles faced the new town. First, there were legal issues to be settled concerning the sale of Prudhomme's land. Stores, which were built before the final court rulings, were destroyed in the devastating flood of 1844. Finally, in 1846 when the United States declared war on Mexico, there was a decrease in the amounts of goods along the Santa Fe Trail. By the late 1840s, the Mexican War was settled and the legal disputes over Prudhomme's land ended, resulting in a new plat for the town. These events paved the way for the rise in businesses along the Missouri River at the little Town of Kansas.

The early growth of Westport and the Town of Kansas was tied directly to the frontier. What started with the Indian trade was replaced with the Santa Fe commerce after trade with Mexico was opened in 1821. An immense amount of goods from the eastern United States and Europe traveled down the Santa Fe trail. In the early 1840s, the United States claimed Oregon, opening new territory for the burgeoning population and in 1849, news of gold in California brought hordes of travelers through western Missouri. Once again, entrepreneurs in Westport and Town of Kansas found themselves in a very profitable position.

## The Town Emerges: 1850s-1870s

The next several decades were a significant chapter in the development of the Town of Kansas. Again, a combination of national decisions and local opportunities shaped the sequence of events that sealed the fate of the riverfront town. Already busy with the Santa Fe Trade, one of the first service-oriented buildings constructed along the levee was the Gillis House hotel. Built in 1849 at the corner of Wyandotte and Levee by Benoist Troost, a medical doctor who set up shop next to the hotel and sold it a year later to William Gillis, a local Indian trader, this hotel was frequently crowded from bottom to top with emigrants. Many were on their way west to California or Oregon, or to the newly admitted states of Nevada, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.

In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act that opened the former Indian Territory for settlement. Now the emigrants flooded in - from the east coast states as well as Germany, England, Belgium, and Ireland. Even before Congress passed new treaties to remove the Indian tribes from eastern Kansas, white squatters settled everywhere.

To make matters worse, Congress determined that these settlers should decide whether Kansas would be admitted as a slave or free state. Since Missouri was a slave state, many residents of the Town of Kansas owned slaves. Even the founding father of the town, the son of a missionary, owned slaves. Census records, however, indicate that many free blacks also resided in the area. Slavery was becoming a national matter and in Massachusetts the activities of a group of abolitionists would have a profound impact on the Town of Kansas. The New England Emigrant Aid Society, founded in 1854, set out to populate the Kansas Territory with antislavery North-

erners. While their tactics were peaceful, the very presence of hundreds of abolitionists in an area ripe with strong pro-slavery opinions set off numerous conflicts and disputes. For several years this organization owned the Gillis House, referred to locally as the Free-State, Union, American, or Eldridge, and conflicts along the levee were not unusual. So strong were the emotions on both sides, that the slavery issue literally divided the town during the Civil War.

What did the Town of Kansas look like in these years? Life still focused on the river where dozens of steamboats came and went, unloading goods and people.

*"At that time the troubles in the territory were so fresh in the minds of the people that almost every man you met was armed. Red shirts, Bowie knives & pistols worn openly at the girdle were every where seen. The levee was crowded with mules, oxen, Santa Fe wagons, greasers, Shawnee & Wyandotte Indians, Border ruffians, & co. Money was plenty and speculation was alive. Paper-town shares went off freely. Gold and silver were the only circulating medium. Scarcely a paper dollar was seen & no copper at all. A three cent piece passed readily for five cents & no man stood upon a few dollars more or less in any ordinary bargain."*

**(Theodore Case, January 1, 1859)**

The few extant photos and personal accounts describe the town as a line of buildings, in varying architectural styles, along the riverfront from Market (Grand) to Wyandotte streets. The huge bluffs towered over these structures, making it difficult to reach the few residences perched on the bluff tops. By the late 1850s however, progress was being made. The local newspaper, the Daily Western Journal of Commerce, whose office was located on the corner of Main and Commercial street, describes the town in 1858:

*"Not a street was cut thro to the levee so as to be used except Market, tho Main Street was open through at an exorbitant angle. All along the whole levee the Bluffs showed far above the tops of the highest buildings. On Market street there was one decent-sized two-story - brick owned & used as a bakery opposite lived Mrs. Chouteau, a French lady whose husband had been one of the pioneers. At the corner of Second Street and Main lived Bunkum Bailey in a two-story frame & on the opposite side lived Jesse Riddlesbarger in a similar house."*

**(Theodore Case 1857).**





View of the Hannibal Bridge and the riverfront following a flood. This photo postdates 1917 when the original Hannibal bridge was replaced with the structure pictured.

The Town of Kansas included 8,000 residents with commercial houses surpassing that of any other Missouri River town, a trade larger than any city her size in the world, four streets cut through the bluffs, cross streets opened for eight square miles from the river, and a whole town built up from outside of her original limits. Other historical sources confirm that it was during this time that the town began its growth up the bluffs, a fact that would eventually lead commercial businesses away from the riverfront. It was also a time for the

construction of numerous buildings along the levee and the arrival of grocery stores, liquor and wine manufacturers, cigar and tobacco distributors, boot and shoe stores, watch makers, dry goods stores, small hotels or boarding houses, restaurants, and several lawyers and doctors offices. A glance through the city directories also suggests that many goods, which had previously been imported into the Town of Kansas, were now being locally produced.

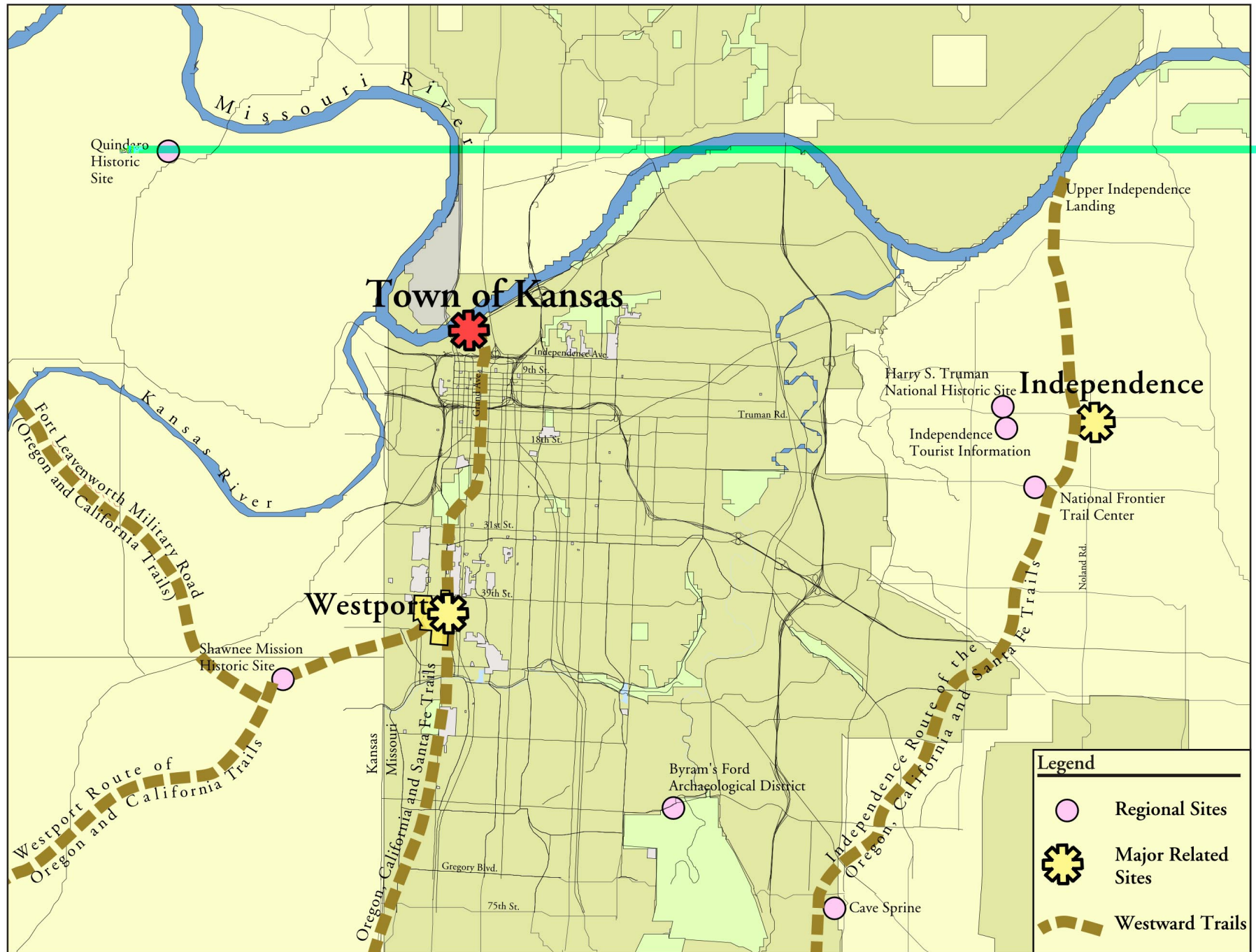
And there was something else happening on the levee that would significantly contribute to the growth of the city and the commercial abandonment of the riverfront. In 1857, the Kansas City, Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad Company was incorporated, with many of the incorporators being residents of the Town of Kansas. Within a year, land was surveyed for the placement of the rail line. But most of this was only on paper.

It was not until 1865 that Kansas City could claim a few rail routes on the south side of the river and a rail line connecting the settlement of Harlem on the north bank of the Missouri River to points north and east.

To get across the Missouri River, one still needed to ride a ferry. The idea of a bridge had been discussed for years but languished during the Civil War when the Kansas City trade was severely reduced. By 1866, local businessmen Charles Kearney and John Reid worked with former newspaper editor and Union officer turned Missouri congressman Robert Van Horn to introduce a bill that would provide federal funds for the Kansas City bridge. The bill passed, allowing for the construction of the Hannibal Bridge, the first bridge to cross the Missouri River. Formally opened on July 3, 1869 to a huge crowd, the bridge sealed the economic fate of the growing city.

As seen in **Figure 5, Relationship to Westward Trails/Other Historic Sites**, by the end of the decade an important new American city was emerging from its “Westward Trails” beginnings.

**Figure 5: Relationship to Westward Trails/Other Historic Sites**



## The Rise of Industry: 1870s-1890s

Historical documents often describe late 19th century Kansas City as rowdy, smoky, greasy, and smelly.

The latter decades of the century were good to the Kansas City economy. The construction of the Hannibal bridge allowed for increased trade and commerce and business was booming. The development of the railroads enabled the transport of a huge number of hogs

and cattle from central Kansas where they resided after being driven along cattle trails from Texas through the Oklahoma Indian territory. Once they arrived in Kansas City, they could either be sent via rail to destinations east or be slaughtered at one of the numerous packinghouses that came to dominate the West Bottoms.

The railroads became the controlling force in the Kansas City economy during the latter part of the 19th century. When the Kansas City Livestock Exchange was formed in 1871, railroad tycoons sat on the governing board. When the First National Bank opened, railroaders served on its board. And when the Kansas City Stock Yard Co. changed leadership in 1876, a Boston railroad tycoon was in control.

It was the railroads that also came to dominate the narrow strip of land along the riverfront that was once the frontier town. Commercial businesses moved up the bluff as Kansas City's population swelled to 50,000 in 1880 and demanded greater amounts of merchandise. The population also demanded lots of beer. To serve a population of 50,000, the city directory boasted 80 saloons. Judging from the number of breweries listed in the directory, most of the beer was produced locally and several of the breweries were located in restyled buildings along the riverfront. Other industrial enterprises existed along the riverfront during this time. Machinery and boiler maker companies dominated the block that once housed the local newspaper office. East of where the famous Gillis House hotel once stood was now the business of Peat Brothers Soap Works, a company owned by Palmolive and set up to take advantage of the by-products of the meatpacking industry.

*"The population of the city included as fine a collection of ruffian brotherhood and sisterhood of the wild West as could well be imagined. Renegade Indians, demoralized soldiers, unreformed bushwhackers, and border ruffians, thieves, and thugs imported from anywhere, professional train robbers of home growth, and all kinds of wrecks from the Civil War."*

(Charles Gleed 1878)



City Market - A staging and assembly area for the trip west.

Some of these businesses remained at this location until after the turn of the century - others closed up or moved out. But the area that was once the bustling frontier town was generally abandoned. Archaeological investigations suggest that the area served as a trash disposal location for several years, a fact that covered the remnants of earlier activities and hid them for nearly a century. As the area was gradually depopulated, some pockets remained. Insurance maps designate an area west of Delaware as the location of the Negro Shanties, shown along the right-of-way of Wyandotte and Elm streets on the 1895.

There is an under-appreciation of African-American occupations in both the Town of Kansas and the Great Plains in the 19th century. Many aspects of the early African-American residents are not

well understood. These areas may have been similar to homes of non-African Americans and simply labeled as Negro due to the ethnic identity of the occupants, or might have been constructed to reflect the economic status of ex-slaves, who may have arrived at the Town of Kansas with few to no resources. Archaeological evidence might offer specific insights into the lifestyle, diet, and material culture of Kansas City's early African-Americans.

Second Street between Delaware and Main, looking East, May 1869. The building in the foreground is the Mechanics Bank Building. Native Sons Collection, Western Historical Manuscripts, UMKC.





# Yearning

# Succeeding

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This historical overview has highlighted the events which shaped the founding and growth of the Town of Kansas. In the course of a few decades, the settlement changed from a French trading post to a busy frontier town. A few decades later, the town changed again to a prosperous midwestern community. Through the course of these changes, the people who came and settled, as well as those who stopped briefly on their way elsewhere, all embodied the desire to find something better in the new surroundings. They all yearned for a better and more successful life. Success however, often meant sacrifices as people adapted to their new life. Physical, economic, and social challenges faced the new inhabitants, and while there were many hardships, in the end, the Town of Kansas grew and prospered.

## Interpretive Themes

The overarching story of the Town of Kansas is that of people in pursuit of fortune and of a better life. It is the story of people willing to take great risk to succeed in this venture. It is the story of people willing to adapt themselves and their environment as times and situations demanded of them. This is a story of mobility, entrepreneurship, flexibility and practicality - all great American attributes.

Town of Kansas's most important remaining resources are the stories of its people: those who settled here, as well as those who passed through this place. Three themes emerge:

### Yearning...

In large measure, people came here of their own volition. Town of Kansas embodies peoples' desire to carve out the best possible life for themselves. In many cases this translated into a scramble to acquire wealth. For others it was escape from a more difficult life elsewhere. For some, it was the joy of exploration and discovery. Many came to help and to educate others, as missionaries, or as opponents to slavery,



The porcelain doll heads, arm and leg recovered during excavations were originally attached to a rag body. These artifacts reflect the presence of children at the Town of Kansas.

# Adapting

## Succeeding...

While some failed, most, those who passed through and those who settled in the area, succeeded, many far beyond their wildest dreams. Town of Kansas is a story of success. Fortunes were made here. People passing through built the western half of a great nation. History was made and the national culture framed the work of its citizens.

## Adapting...

Success required modification of traditional ways of thinking. Even the landscape had to be adapted to realize initial success in this place. Success brought further change, cultural, economic, technological. The need and the ability to adapt to changing conditions is written across Town of Kansas.



Kansas Archaeological Field School excavations, 1992. This northeast corner of Shannon's Dry Goods store shows the interior brick walls. The area below the plaster covering probably represents the basement level of the building.

## Key Historic Resources

Based upon investigations to date of the story and the setting, any master plan of Town of Kansas should include the general area bounded on the north by the Missouri River, Broadway to the west, the ASB rail lines to the east, Second Street on the south and important street corridors, (Main, Delaware and Grand), crossing the River Market Area, (**Figure 2: Key Town of Kansas Boundaries**). It is within this area that the main stories of Town of Kansas can best be told. The fact that early historic settings, particularly in the area of the riverfront and bluffs, may have been lost to subsequent development and neglect, is an important component of the story. A critical objective of future actions in Town of Kansas should be to arrest further trampling of the 'resource', in particular the archaeological sites, while finding ways to return the area to its former exuberance.

Of the earliest times, not much is immediately evident, except the stories. Lewis and Clark passed by. Of the earlier trading post, the strategic location remains evident. The rock ledge that turned the river eastward and provided good harbor at Westport Landing is obscured and isolated by railroad and flood protection measures.

## The Archaeological Field

The archaeological investigations that have been undertaken within the past decade have uncovered a wealth of information about life in Town of Kansas. Only an estimated 8-10% of the site has been explored. Material collections are growing and will continue to expand as new projects are undertaken on the site. A wealth of archival materials presently located in a variety of organized libraries as well as in local attics is yet to be fully gathered and investigated.

## The Bluffs and the Street Grid

In 1846, the townsite was officially platted through the bluffs, above this strategic ledge outcropping on the Missouri River. The original relationship between river, street grid and bluff is still easily seen, despite major regrading of the original topography and the overlay of railroad and floodwall.

Historic artifacts of important parts of the early town lie, no doubt, beneath the earth at the foot of the bluff, ironically, protected by early abandonment of this part of the Town of Kansas.

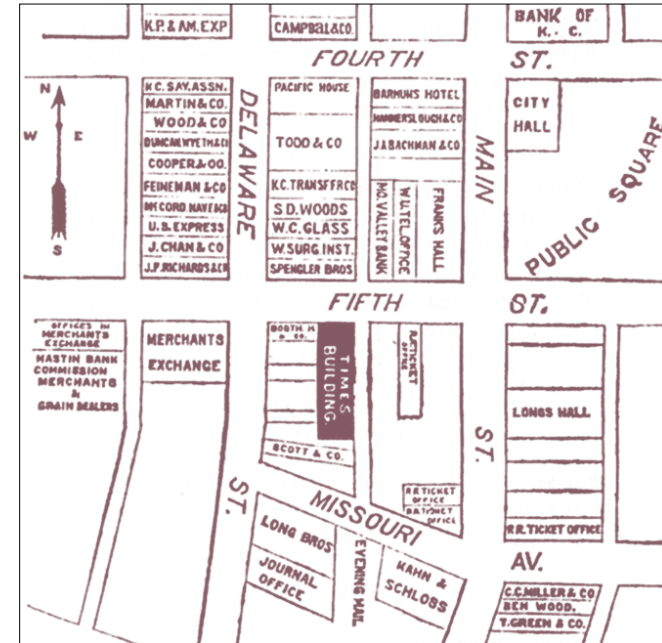
A City was born here. People settled here to service traders and settlers passing through. The land was transformed, with enormous bluffs cut down to make way for streets and to fill in ravines. They started a humble trading center, built a town and then a City. Today, a few buildings and the original street grid remain. Future citizens of lands to be settled west of here passed through these streets, along with the goods to support them. They carried their dreams and the seeds of a new nation through this gateway to the West.

## The Railroads and Bridges

By the end of the Civil War, the infrastructure of railroads, and bridges we see today bordering and criss-crossing Town of Kansas had begun to emerge. Perhaps the two most important of these are the Hannibal Bridge and the Pacific and Missouri mainline track that lie atop the original Levee and Front Street. Both of these remain in very active use today.

## The Riverfront

Even the Army Corps of Engineers' floodwall has important stories to tell, as it stands as silent reminder that the natural forces of weather, water and river pushed the Town of Kansas quickly up and onto the safer ground behind the bluffs.



Developing the Bluff



Post 1917 view of the riverfront after a major flood. Several of the buildings are still standing, but obviously in ruin.



## Today's Context

### Existing Conditions

Over the years much has been lost to natural forces of erosion and flooding and to subsequent phases of development and land transformation.

The site is clearly impacted by the railroads, which have cut the Town of Kansas from the river, while cutting through historic Front Street. Train noise is very substantial. In similar fashion, the floodwall presents a major visual barrier. Utility lines cross the site creating visual intrusions and hampering development of an important tourist attraction here.

On top of the bluff, along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, unattractive industrial uses (recycling facilities), active railroad switching, power plant facilities combine to limit not only efforts to develop the Town of Kansas concept, but also the revitalization of its River Market neighborhood. **(Figure 6: Area Context/ Existing Conditions)**

While the major economic and mercantile center of the region moved south long ago, the area is enjoying a renaissance as a residential and entertainment district. As with those who came before them, clearly, these newest arrivals to Town of Kansas see opportunity here.

### A Renaissance is in Progress

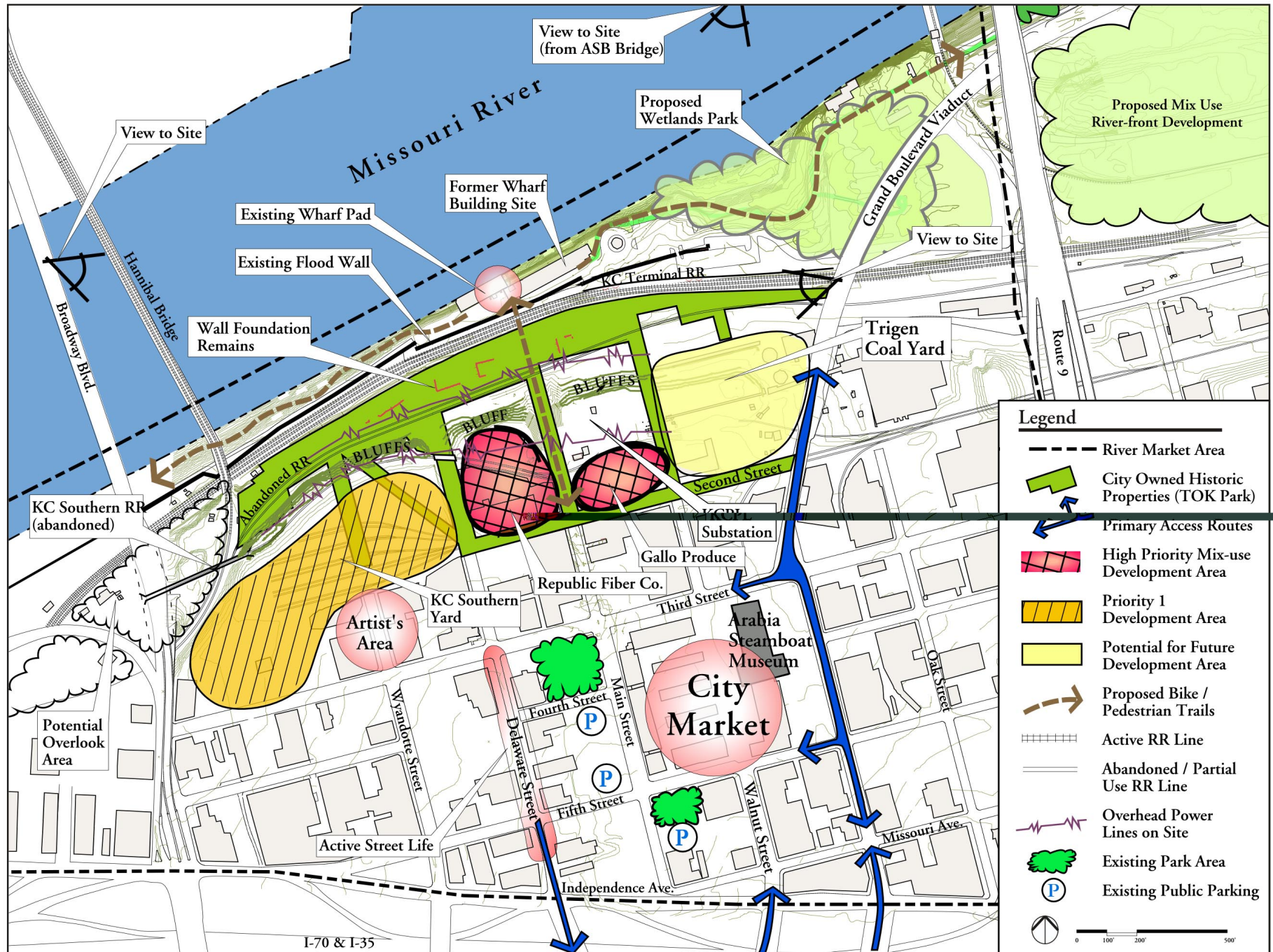
Throughout the River Market Area, private developers are recycling historic structures into offices and loft apartments. Street level commercial space is reaching critical mass again. The City has made a major commitment to both the historic City Market and the district's open areas, with street improvements, new parks and parking areas.

At the edge of the bluff, overlooking the core archaeological zone, underutilized railroad and industrial property is primed for redevelopment. The City and Port Authority, along with the Army Corps of Engineers and organizations public and private, are interested in reconnecting the City to its river origins at this place. Much planning has been done and significant dollars have been spent in hopes of attracting people and private development back to the river again.



The Arabia Museum has helped rejuvenate City Market

**Figure 6: Area Context/Existing Conditions**



As the story of the Town of Kansas unfolds, it is clear that activities, events, and people in surrounding towns and locations were either connected to the national 19th century expansion efforts or directly to the Town of Kansas. With the connection to overland trails, businesses and entrepreneurs at the Town of Kansas surely competed or interacted with similar operations in Westport, Independence, and Leavenworth. Settlers moving west could start their journey from several places, each offering certain advantages. Visible trail ruts in southern Jackson County and throughout several eastern Kansas counties are strong reminders of the multiple routes that were available for overland travel. If asked, most people would associate the battles of Bull Run, Gettysburg or Vicksburg with the Civil War, but several decisive and important battles occurred in the West. Union and Confederate loyalist existed side by side in Missouri

and the adjoining frontier land, a story recently portrayed in the motion picture "Ride with the Devil". Families and towns were often divided in their support, which often included the issue of slavery. The towns of Quindaro and Lawrence were founded by anti-slavery northerners while surrounding farms staunchly supported the Union. Today, one can visit both battle sites (Westport, Byram's Ford and Mine Creek) and towns such as Lecompton and Osawatomi and learn how both forces interacted during the Civil War. With the development of the Town of Kansas, it will also be possible for visitors to learn that while people debated the morality of slavery in the back rooms of the Gillis House hotel or along the riverfront Levee, other communities like Quindaro or the William Bent home provided free blacks safe passage along the underground railroad. With the coming of the railroads, Kansas City strongly influ-

enced and interacted with points west and east. For example, as new territory in eastern Kansas became available for purchase in the 1870s, it is interesting to note that the names of several prominent Kansas Citians appear as the first owners. Coal mining in Cherokee County Kansas was a booming business in the late 1800s as the demand for coal increased and railroads were able to transport the product to industrial centers. The names of Nathaniel Emory and Kersey Coates are frequently listed as property owners of some of the first strip mining locations in southeast Kansas. The resulting wealth in their control over this very lucrative business can be partially measured by such historical events as the construction of the first department store in Kansas City and one of the first luxury hotels.

# 3 Site Research and Archaeology

## The Need and the Opportunity

**T**he story of the Town of Kansas is fascinating and intriguing. The telling of this story through history and archaeology provides an opportunity for two adventures. The first is to create something better for the riverfront - a better scenery, a better city view, and a better means of captivating an audience with a creative and interactive look at our own past. In the mid 1800's, this was the frontier, and the west with its open spaces and small towns beckoned many settlers. Their adaptation to this land was truly legendary, as told in historical volumes and motion pictures. But now the story can be told through both history and archaeology and can give us a chance to identify with many people, perhaps our own relatives, who came here looking for something better. The objects recovered through excavation are tangible evidence of the numerous trials and successes which helped shape what Kansas City is today. They are a visual reminder of where we came from and a source of unparalleled information.

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The ultimate success of the Town of Kansas was a mixture of national issues and local settings. Today the Interpretative Park project provides an orientation for the presentation of an important time in our Nation's past and gives us the second adventure. National interests in overland trade and western frontier settlement shaped the character of the Town of Kansas. As a prominent jumping off point

for western travel, perhaps the most significant advantage the town offered was its connection to both the isolated areas on the frontier as well as the more populated producing cities of the East. Settlers, prospectors, and traders came to the Town of Kansas; some to stay and some to move on. This was the frontier and the humble beginnings of Kansas City contributed significantly to the growth of a nation.





1992 Kansas Archaeological Field's School investigations of J&P Shannon's Dry Goods store, located at Main Street and the Levee. View is to the west northwest.

Information which can contribute to a better understanding of why people came, how they adapted to new and challenging situations, and how their efforts contributed to the success of the Town of Kansas can be found in both historical documents and in the archaeological record. Both sources provide significant insights into the past, but they differ in the kinds of information that can be used to reconstruct the 19th century events that provide interpretative material for today's enjoyment and knowledge. A well formulated plan incorporating both research sources is vital to the ongoing success of the larger Interpretative Park.

Professional archaeological investigations, **(Figure 7: Archaeological Investigations to Date)** initiated at the Town of Kansas site in 1992 and continued on an intermittent basis for the past 7 years, were largely designed to either evaluate the potential of the site to provide information based on intact buried deposits or to evaluate the presence or significance of deposits within the right-of-way of a planned disturbance. All investigations recovered materials related to the 19th occupation of the site, in varying degrees

of integrity. It is therefore realistic to approach any future archaeological investigations with the attitude that the recovery of additional 19th century materials is likely.

Archival documents, including personal memoirs, letters, photos, newspaper articles, tax records, and title deeds, have likewise been researched. In fact, several excellent historical manuscripts are published and readily accessible. However, this research has largely been done within the context of describing the historical and lineal sequence of events that founded the Town of Kansas.

In conjunction with archaeological investigations, archival research at this level will focus on specific buildings, people, and dates. It will strive to explain why a particular event happened, what were the circumstances leading up to that event, and how the event or behavior influenced subsequent actions. For example, questions that may be asked related to work that has already been done at Shannon's Dry Goods story include:

- What high dollar items did Patrics Shannon import from Europe for his store?

- Who was he selling this merchandise to?
- Did the availability of these items convince certain families to stay at the Town of Kansas?

In essence, the archival and archaeological investigations will go beyond describing the main events, but will explore the everyday happenings and bring the research to a personal level. In doing so, the research may well extend beyond the archaeological field. Extant photographs, documents, and tax records already indicate that homes and a few businesses were constructed on top of the bluff or south of the river. In fact, most of the early structures built directly along the riverfront between the Levee and Commercial Street were commercial with a few apartments available on the top floors. Most residents therefore lived up the bluff or to the west from the heart of Town of Kansas. Archival research will help identify where these early homes were built while preliminary archaeological could evaluate the integrity of any remaining deposits.

# Research Design Description

## Initial Platform Studies and Documentary Research

Previous archaeological investigations, including a master plan for the site, have evaluated the current understanding of both sources of information and have suggested two initial approaches for further investigations. These suggestions are endorsed for this research design for they increase the baseline understanding of the site to a more comprehensive level:

- Prepare a comprehensive field survey of the Town of Kansas, noting the location of all surface features and structural remnants. This survey should produce a surface map of the site, and record the location of all cultural and natural features, utility placements, and previous archaeological investigations.
- Create a comprehensive map of the historical landscape of the Town of Kansas, with a focus on title records, tax documents, and ownership indices. This map should chart the historical changes through time.
- Assess other archival sources and the available information base on the Town of Kansas. This task would identify location(s), amount, and type of archival materials, evaluate the cost and feasibility of obtaining the various archival materials, and prepare a chronological list of immigration, noting the origin of the emigrants, their various skills, and possible reasons for coming to the Town of Kansas.

## Archaeological Field Investigation

Once the documentary information is gathered and assessed, areas within the site should be selected for subsurface investigation. This selection should balance the desire to recover materials important in addressing and reconstructing the past with the development of the archaeological park. It is also important to select areas that might provide a cross-section of the activities or behaviors likely preserved in different kinds of businesses.

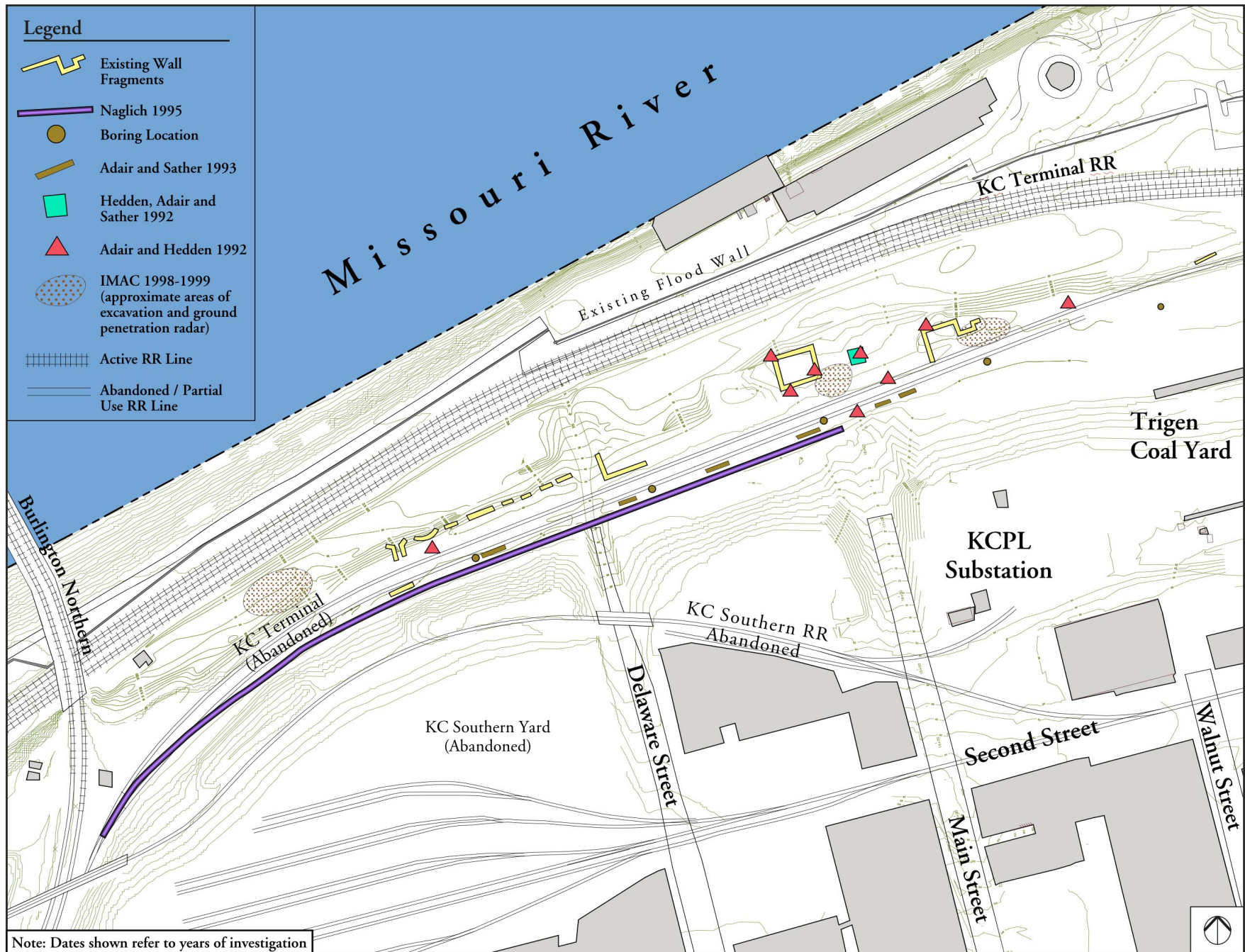
Regardless of the historical information gained through excavation, any subsurface work should contribute to the following:

- determine vertical and horizontal arrangement of artifacts and structural remains
- establish the site formation processes and chart the relationship between quantities of 19th and 20th century artifacts
- identify artifact displacement and/or reverse stratigraphy

The initial field investigation, over a first working “season,” should be targeted to areas that have the highest potential, based on the documentary research, to yield evidence that can contribute to the design and programming of the core visitor center exhibits and interpretation. Even before the visitor center and exhibit(s) are complete, this investigation will create interest in the site’s hidden story and will be an opportunity to create program partnerships to further the educational mission of the site.

Investigation in subsequent seasons should be planned at a sustaining and minimum level of effort sufficient to make real progress on addressing the research questions posed below, and should be viewed as a multi-year “core” effort that can be pursued reliably and can be one basis for ongoing site research, as well as an opportunity for on- and off-site interpretive programs.

**Figure 7: Archaeological Investigations to Date**







Several coins and Civil War tokens were recovered during excavations. These artifacts provide good information on the time the area or building was occupied.

## Collection Potentials

The material cultural remains that could be recovered through archaeological investigations have the potential to be one of the nation's best systematic 19th century collections from a frontier settlement. The materials that are collected through field studies should be storied professionally on-site, and could be combined with the artifacts collected in previous site archaeological investigations.

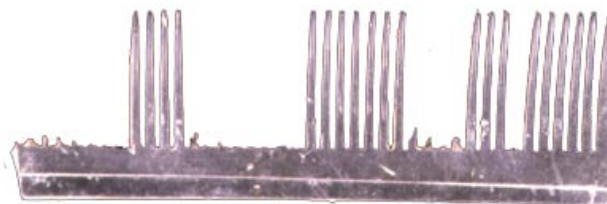
The following guidelines should be used to assure the collection receives professional attention.

- Adhere to highest curatorial, artifact documentation, and storage standards to insure that the collection is accessible and professionally stored.

- Describe/show/explain/interpret the artifacts recovered.
- Identify changes through time, including the rise and fall of different products and new technologies.
- Capitalize on the context - where were artifacts found and how does this contribute to the interpretation.
- Conduct comparative artifact studies- Arabia, Bertrand, western settlements, Museum of the Fur Trade - are there patterns? Are these socio-cultural or economic?



Rubber comb fragments recovered in 1992 from the lower levels of Shannon's store.



## Research Questions

If we are to learn more about our Nation's history and the Town of Kansas through archaeology, we must ask questions about why people came here and how they managed to survive in what has been described as a rough and dirty frontier town. What were they hoping to find here that was not attainable elsewhere? How did they interact with others and the natural environment to achieve success or learn new skills? How did their efforts help shape the West and contribute to national history?

Archaeology can answer many questions, as well as raise new ones. Our current historical view of Town of Kansas is based almost entirely on what literate people chose to write about. But there is more to know and more to share through asking questions and recovering artifacts. Initially, the questions that direct the research can be based on our current level of understanding about the site and the historical events that both created and expanded the settlement. Some of the questions offered below may also serve as a guide for the comprehensive approaches.

## Topic 1: The Intersection of Native Americans and Europeans

The Town of Kansas area was inhabited by Native Americans long before the arrival of Francois Chouteau. Occupation of northwest Missouri spans over 10,000 years but it is not until the arrival of Europeans that written records provide information, albeit limited, on these people. In the 19th century their presence was a primary factor in Chouteau's decision to establish a trading post and their involvement with fur trapping was critical to the success of this lucrative business. Archaeological investigations therefore, should be sensitive to the recovery of any artifactual evidence of the Native American presence and should attempt to answer:

- What were the contributions of Native Americans to the original European settlement and subsequent town development?
- How did the Native Americans react to the settlement?
- Was there Intermarriage? Displacement?

## Topic 2: The River and the Land

Previous investigations have exposed a complex layering of soil and artifacts, which owe their contextual setting to both natural and cultural forces. What are these forces? Are they consistent throughout the site? Given the current understanding of the historical use, re-use, and post-occupational activities of certain lots, it is unlikely that all areas within the designated archaeological site will exhibit the same sequence of events within a stratigraphic profile. Variations in the horizontal and vertical record contribute to an understanding of how the site was

formed and the interaction of human settlement with natural systems and geography. Some related questions:

- Why did some things get preserved and others did not?
- How can this information be used to explain what archaeologists do?
- What was the impact of periodic flooding?
- How accessible was this location - both for those coming and going?



Revival of Steamboat activity. This photo was taken between 1890 and 1920 when the ASB bridge was under construction. The bridge was completed in 1911. Native Sons Collection, Western Historical Collections, UMKC.



Westport's first Town Hall

### Topic 3: The Early Town

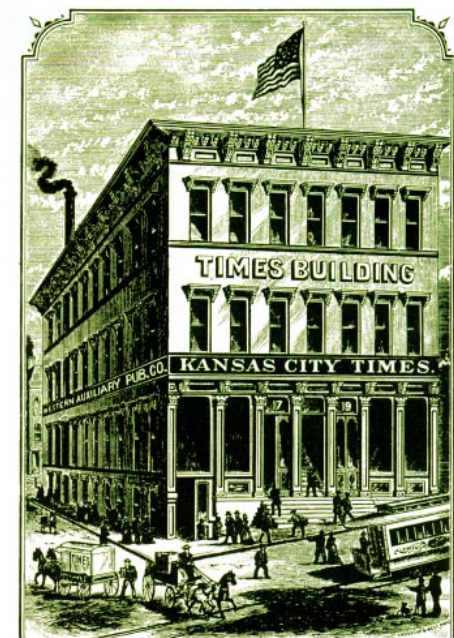
The Town of Kansas has been described by various terms, including quaint, charming, rowdy, greasy, smoky, and smelly. Using both historical documents and archaeological artifacts, there exists a possibility to describe and recreate the sights, sounds, and smells of 19th century frontier life at the Town of Kansas. Some questions to ask as this develops are:

- How were the buildings constructed and what materials were used?
- How did the growing town cope with sanitation problems?
- Were abundant native plants and animals used for food?
- How did the population profile change over time? What were the proportions of men, women, and children?
- How do the various articles and editorials in the local newspaper help create the image? Do they match up with the material evidence in the site?

### Topic 4: Business and Trade in Town of Kansas and beyond

While the initial success of the Town of Kansas was tied to Indian and overland trails, the commercial and technological advances of the 1850's-1880's were powerful measures which propelled the emerging city to success over its rivals. Questions which should be addressed with historical documents and archaeological remains include:

- What are the differences between goods traded in and those manufactured locally?
- Are there any connections between old businesses and present day businesses in the KC area or elsewhere?
- Are there ethnic/social distinctions within the artifacts?



A city emerges on the Bluff.

## Topic 5: Race, Civil War, and Territory

The Civil War rocked the whole nation, and in Kansas City, it directly divided the city between Northern abolitionists and Southern pro-slavery landowners. Local disputes and conflicts are legendary, while several decisive battles of the Civil War took place within the vicinity of early Kansas City. The site's artifacts can potentially contribute to a better understanding of these local events. There is an under-appreciation of African-American occupations in both the Town of Kansas and the Great Plains in the 19th century. Insurance maps designate an area west of Delaware as the location of the "Negro Shanties." The Rutgers birds' eye views (1869 and 1878) do not identify these structures, which may have been as small as 10x15 ft. But several historical photographs suggest these small residences existed near the foot of Wyandotte and Elm Streets in the 1870's.

Historical sources on this community are probably extremely limited. Questions about these physical structures that could be addressed with archaeological investigations include:

- Was there an area along the riverfront occupied by African-Americans prior to this date? What was the physical appearance of these structures?
- Were they similar to homes of non-African Americans and simply labeled as Negro due to the ethnic identity of the occupants, or were they constructed to reflect the economic status of ex-slaves, who may have arrived at the Town of Kansas with few to no resources?
- What archaeological evidence might offer specific insights into the lifestyle, diet, and material culture of Kansas City's early African-Americans?

Additionally, the research and field work should strive to better describe how torn the City really was during the war years. The Gillis House hotel should be investigated as a backdrop from which to address the following questions and topics:

- Known for its anti-slavery campaigns, the New England Emigrant Aid Society used this hotel for its headquarters while it worked to populate the Kansas Territory with Northerners. Are there any remnants of this activity in the archaeological record?
- Historical documents suggest that the hotel may have been a participating location to help slaves to freedom through the underground railroad. Is there archaeological evidence of this? How strong is the historical documentary evidence?

Several hand-blown glass tumblers, like the one pictured here, were recovered by the 1992 excavations.





# The Research Program

## Phasing and Emphasis

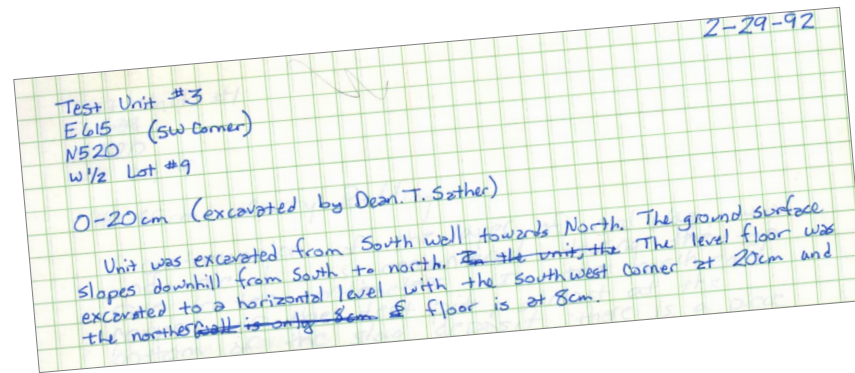
As previously outlined, the archaeological and documentary research should be approached with a phased plan. The first phase consists of three components: completion of a comprehensive field survey of the site; construction of a comprehensive historical landscape map of the site and an assessment of related archival documents; and the excavation of a select area for one field season.

It is estimated that these three components will require 12-18 months to complete, taking into possible account down time due to weather. The documentary research, which includes the creation of the landscape map and the assessment of the wide range of archival materials, will require the full time attention of 2 people for about 2-3 months. In con-

junction with this research, a field crew of 4 people will work 2 months mapping the location of all structural remnants, features, and post-occupational disturbances. This should ideally be done during the winter months when vegetation growth is low and the transient population is reduced. Removal of overgrown vegetation will be necessary to enhance visibility, which will require the services of either city crews or private companies. Both the field survey map and historic landscape map should be produced with similar scales, allowing one to over-lay the other. Two people working full time for one month should be able to generate these maps. (All final maps should be digitized in an agreed upon format). Ideally, they should have also worked in the field and/or with the documentary research, giving them greater understanding of the intricacies involved and the ability to retrace steps if necessary.

The third component of this phase calls for a season of limited excavation, but on a scale that would expose just enough of the site to capture the interest of the public. One season in technical terms equates to about 6-8 weeks (2 months) of field investigation and 4-5 months of report preparation. Based on an evaluation of the documentary research and field survey, this investigation should focus on an area within the site with a high potential of yielding significant, intact deposits. The excavation should be conducted by experienced professionals;

Dean's  
Archaeological  
Field Notes

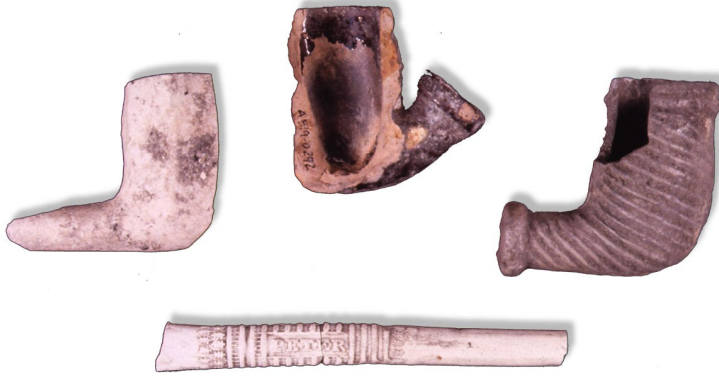


important educational programs such as field schools and workshops are better suited within the sustained long-term excavation programs. The field work part of the investigation will require a team of approximately 6 people, including the principal investigator/project director. The crew should consist of people capable of bringing various research and technical expertise to the team. Two of these people, plus the project director, should continue working 5 months after the fieldwork, analyzing artifacts and preparing a report.

If funding is available, these initial platform studies and documentary research could be conducted within the near future. This work could easily be accomplished while attention is given to other components of the project, such as the design/construction plans for the visitor center, business relocation, and securing long-term funding and local partnership. In fact, having a more comprehensive understanding of the site, its complexity, and potential to provide exciting and tantalizing evidence can be used to promote the development of the park and secure funding.

Subsequent season(s) of field investigations can be conducted without the previous level of archival research but must be planned and executed according to a research design in conjunction with interpretative venues and outreach programs. Some documentary research may need to be refined, especially if new

materials become available, but the comprehensive work should serve as a backdrop for future investigations. A determination of the size of the crew and the amount of time required for field investigations and report preparation is premature at this time, as this field work will likely be conducted within the framework of public programs and interpretative activities. It is likely however, that well designed field schools and training workshops could be offered to both decrease the costs of field work and directly expose archaeological techniques to the public.



Clay pipes and stem fragments, recovered in 1992, are one of several personal items that were originally imported from cities farther east.

It is at this point however, that the primary archaeological team (the project director or principal investigator) becomes sustained on a more long-term level. This could be accomplished through the development of a partnership with a local private company or academic institution. This arrangement will require an evaluation of several key issues that are important to the success and financial security of the larger park project. These issues are:

- continuity of key staff through the duration of the several seasons
- availability of qualified, trained excavators
- adherence to professional standards of recovery and reporting
- potential for this work to provide a learning laboratory for students/future excavators (the ability to train or instruct new blood)

- association of the institution/company to other potential funding sources (i.e. outside grants, internal awards or fellowships)
- ability to tap the interest/involvement of people in related fields
- access to specialized research or analytical tools and equipment
- the ability of the company/institution to work with other entities

An Ivory cue ball and bone poker chip are artifacts that identify the presence of gambling at the Town of Kansas.



## Needs for Support Services, Collection Services, and Storage

During the course of the documentary research and initial platform studies, an on-site laboratory and collection storage facility is very important. This could be considered a 'command center' where all related documentation, artifacts, and archival materials can be consolidated. A temporary facility is sufficient at this time, and would provide the following advantages:

- Enables the materials to be maintained close to the site at a location accessible to others involved with the project
- Provides the opportunity to assess the actual amount of space needed in the visitor center for similar operations.
- Eliminates the potential for artifacts to become lost or damaged during transport to another location
- Makes it very easy for the field crew to walk from the site to the lab
- Field, laboratory and computer equipment that can be designated solely for the use of the Town of Kansas project would be readily available

Until the visitor center is complete or plans to construct a research center on-site are developed, a curation facility for the artifacts and documentation needs to be identified. The curation of this collection should not be taken lightly. The artifacts are manufactured from a variety of materials, including bone, shell, wood, cloth, metal, and glass, with some artifacts containing more than one material type. Each of these material types requires special attention to assure its long-term survival and without knowledge of these environmental requirements, even the most well-intentioned individual can cause irreversible damage. While there are several preventative conservation techniques that should be applied in the field or field laboratory as the excavation progresses that can be part of the field crew expertise, there is no substitute for museum level conservation and collection management skills. These standards are adopted by federal agencies for the curation of public-owned archaeological collections

(see 36CFR, part 79) while the National Park Service is in the process of developing similar standards.

With the initiation of long-termed sustained investigations, the need for a curation facility becomes critical. The initial season's investigations will likely produce around 100 cubic feet of collections (including both documentation and artifacts), a figure that could be minimally expected to grow by that amount each season.

Hand-blown glass bottle recovered in 1992 document the types of goods used, both manufactured in early Kansas City or imported from Eastern Territory.





## Staffing Implications

For the initial documentary research and field season, the skills required for the team can be broken down by position and areas of expertise.

The Project Director should have a PhD in Archaeology and experience with historic 19th century archaeological sites. He/she should also have experience with organizing and running a project of this size and complexity and should be comfortable working within the parameters of city guidelines.

The field excavators should likewise have experience with historic archaeology or be trained in the investigation of a variety of depositional situations. All should have a basic understanding of the types and conditions of late 19th century artifacts. It is anticipated that some of the field crew would have Master's degrees in Archaeology, although this would not be a requirement.

Some areas of expertise that should be available include:

- mapping and instrumentation use
- database creation
- geomorphological interpretation
- plant and animal remains identification
- field conservation techniques
- photography
- talking with the press

It is not uncommon for one person to be designated to handle visitors, or offer tours. This does not have to be the project director, but instead someone with good 'people skills' who also is very knowledgeable about the site.

For the documentation research, these people need prior experience in reading and following ownership indices and tax records. Reading these documents can be a tedious process and extremely frustrating for those not familiar with how to extract the needed information. If at least one of these people is knowledgeable of the local history, seeking out likely locations of other archival materials can be facilitated.

The construction of the comprehensive historical landscape map will require someone with the ability to read and create maps and who also has a good knowledge of the existing lay of the land.

# 4 The Plan

This Section describes the proposed Master Plan for Town of Kansas which will guide efforts to: preserve the resource; research the town and its stories; interpret those stories for public education and enjoyment; and importantly, reinforce economic development of the River Market Area.

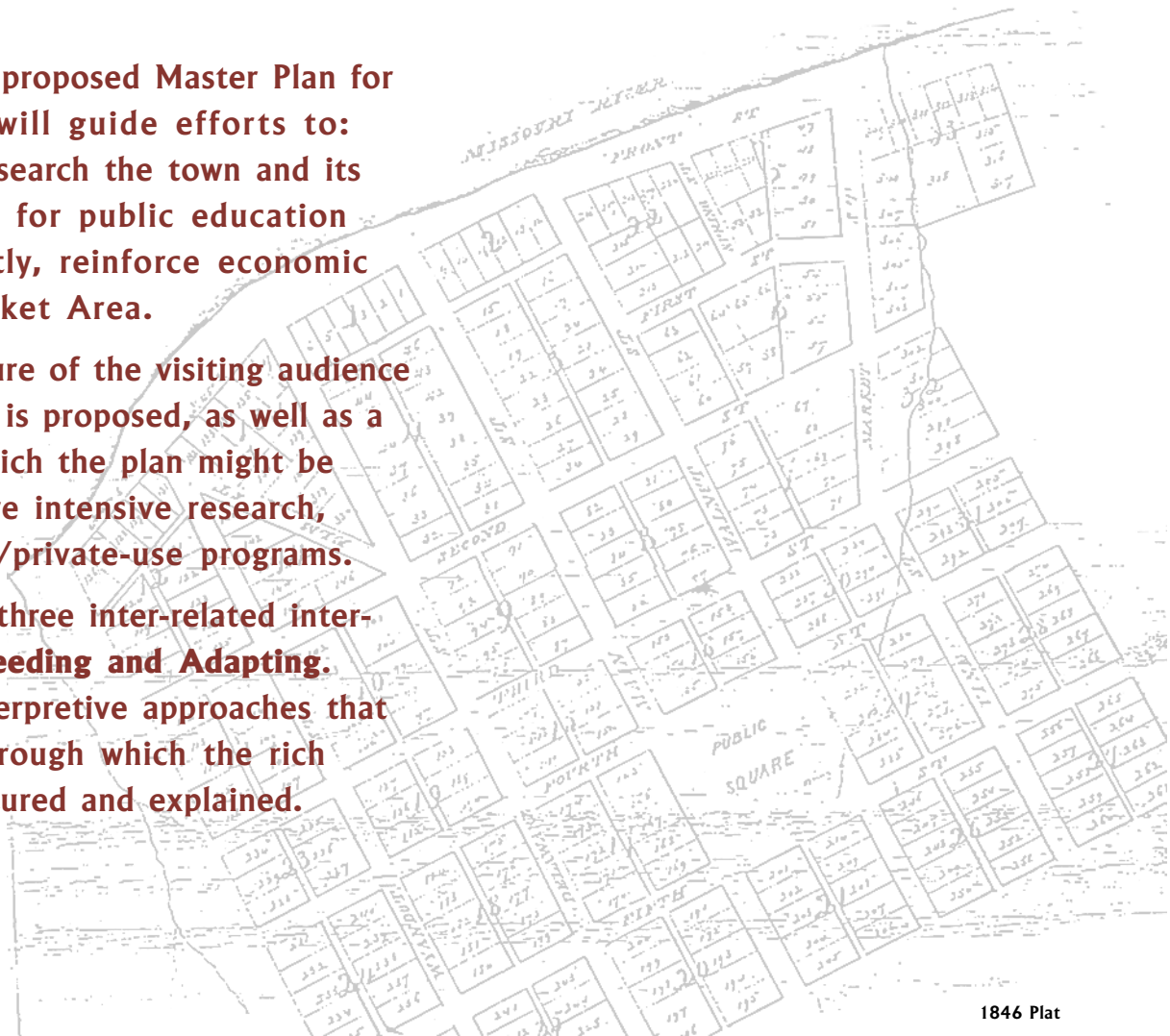
As part of this section, the nature of the visiting audience is discussed. A “Baseline” Plan is proposed, as well as a number of ways identified in which the plan might be expanded to accommodate more intensive research, educational, and mixed, public/private-use programs.

Settings are introduced for the three inter-related interpretive themes, **Yearning, Succeeding and Adapting**. Each is explored in multiple interpretive approaches that offer dramatic opportunities through which the rich heritage of this site can be captured and explained.

MAP OF  
THE TOWN OF  
KANSAS

1846

SCALE 250 FT PER INCH



1846 Plat



The Plan allows visitors close inspection of ongoing archaeological activity.

## Defining the Audience

### Who Will Come

Kansas City has many attractions, but nowhere is the story of its founding and development well-told today. Town of Kansas provides the setting for residents and visitors alike to learn about the City, to witness and indeed, to experience the rediscovery of her heritage and the yearnings, successes, and adaptations that made Kansas City all she is today.

Who is the intended Town of Kansas audience? Museums mostly attract families (usually two generations visiting together), and middle school children delivered by school bus. Historical sites tend to attract older audiences, particularly among individuals who may have already developed some familiarity with the exhibit material. The Plan will attract a wide range of visitors with different interests and learning styles. The Plan must also attract large numbers of visitors while accommodating the views and concerns of preservationists, historians and archaeological scholars. This Plan assumes a stabilized attendance of 150,000 to 200,000 visitors per year.

## Why Visitors Will Come

While education is a major goal, to attract visitors the Town of Kansas experience must be enjoyable, engaging, and memorable. If it is a successful attraction, its preservation is ensured.

The key is a series of individually crafted learning experiences that make the lessons directly relevant to the visitor, and to do this in ways that are fun and entertaining. Each interpretive element will invite interaction with the visitor. These will be short but meaningful moments.

People also visit attractions because they have a pre-visit image of a place. The Swan Boats on Boston's Public Garden are a good example. The Town of Kansas needs to be prominently named, labeled and recognized. This may be accomplished in the design of the Visitor Center, or with a spectacular water and light fountain along the Missouri River waterfront. This high-profile approach provides an opportunity to increase Kansas City's public image, while featuring the Town of Kansas' riverfront origin.

## How The Park Will Accommodate Different Visitors

Old-fashioned museums, like old-fashioned classrooms, tend to emphasize "imparting knowledge" as their objective, whereas newer museums and classrooms stress "making meaning" in unique ways that may differ for each individual. Today visitors – young and old – want to be active participants in the public programs and presentations. Rather than being passive receptors of information, visitors want to make choices, manipulate the learning environment, share their opinions and establish their own pace.

The interpretive elements we have proposed for Town of Kansas and the themes of Yearning, Succeeding and Adapting, all beckon the individual visitor with ways to personalize their experience and see how the site's heritage relates to their own values.

## What Will Activate the Park Year-Round

Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall people find places to enjoy themselves and have a good time. Visitor Centers, museums and historic sites are, above all, places that can provide new and sometimes challenging – even fun – experiences.

Given the archaeological heritage of the site, the unique topography and local climate, this plan does not rely exclusively upon outdoor recreational experiences. The interpretive plan for the Town of Kansas site, once implemented, can encourage young people to pursue education, science and history-related careers and strengthen the community's knowledge of its own rich history, goals and accomplishments. New interpretive components of the Park will include history and theatrical interpretation programs, weekend and summer archaeology workshops; a documentary research center; a visitor center; an archaeological research campus; volunteer programs, electronic-based distance-learning, and other community outreach programs.

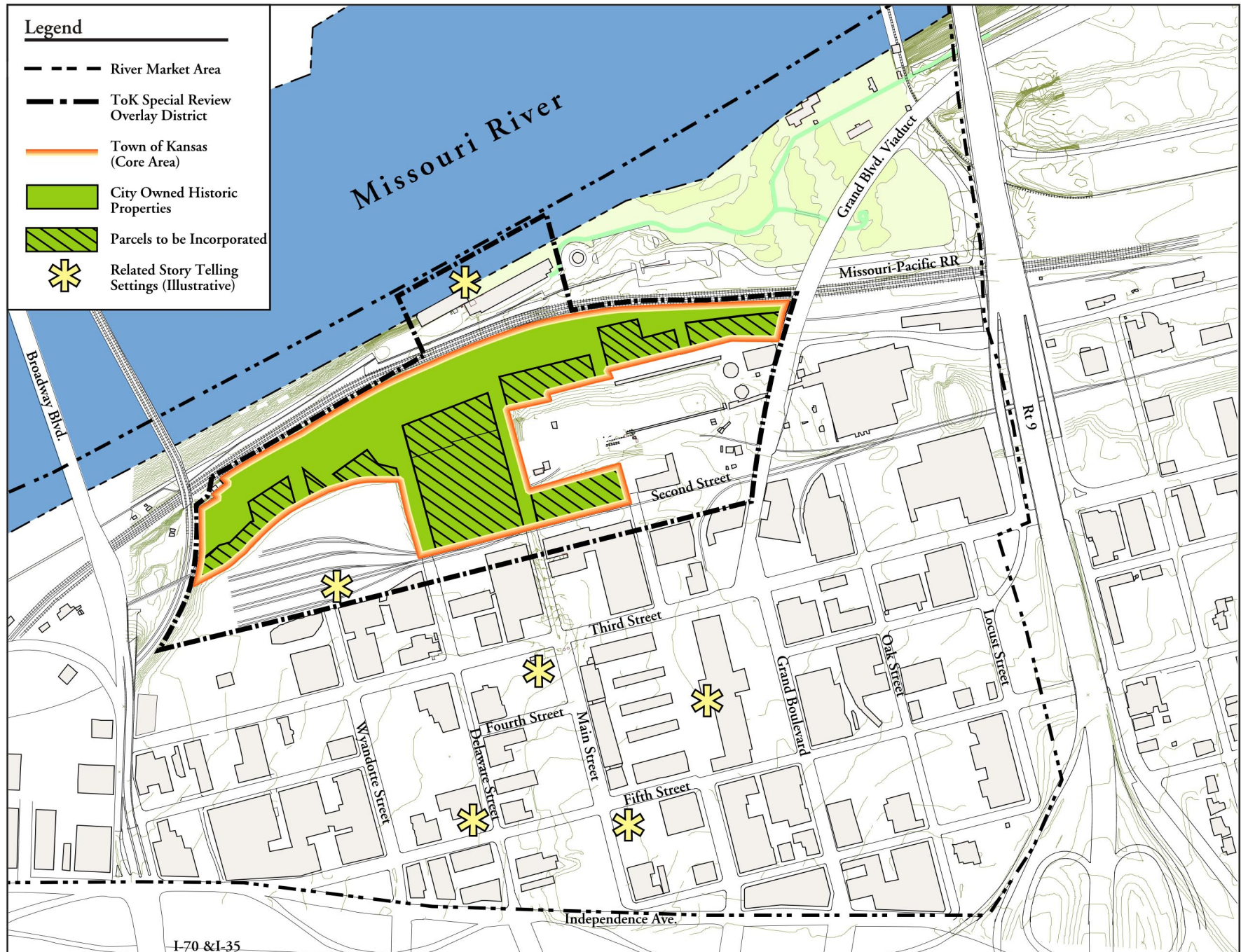


**The master plan proposes three key bounded areas for Town of Kansas:**

- 1. A designated Town of Kansas (Core Area)**- a long, narrow archaeologically rich area, generally bounded east and west respectively by the ASB and Hannibal Bridge approaches and the top of the Bluff and the existing Missouri Pacific Railroad to the south and north. It is here that the Town of Kansas development plan is centered. This area is largely city-owned.
- 2. The River Market Area with its rich Story-Telling Settings**- though the name was changed to Kansas City in 1853, (less than 10 years after the original plat for Town of Kansas was granted), activities at the river and on the original town site determined the development of the high ground beyond the bluff, well into the late 1890's.
- 3. A Special Review Overlay District** is proposed for a limited area around the Town of Kansas Core Area.

Each of these areas is illustrated in **Figure 8: Town of Kansas Bounded Areas** and described in following paragraphs.

**Figure 8: Town of Kansas Bounded Areas**



## Town of Kansas (Core Area)

The proposed bounded core area of Town of Kansas includes property owned by the City, as well as parcels that the Plan recommends be integrated, either through purchase, donation or easement, into this core area. The site includes:

- the publicly-owned, primary **Archaeological Fields** lying between the Commercial Street/former Chicago & Alton RR corridor and the Missouri Pacific Railroad mainline tracks,
- the **Top of the Bluff and Buffer Zone**, including recommended sites to be integrated into the Plan via purchase, or easement, including the former Union Terminal right-of-way west of Main, the Republic Fiber co. and the Gallo Produce properties between Delaware and Walnut,

- an **Archaeology Buffer Zone** between the top of the Bluff and Commercial Street/former Chicago & Alton RR corridor,
- a **Pedestrian Bridge**, presently under design, that links Main Street back to the River, will cross the archaeological fields.

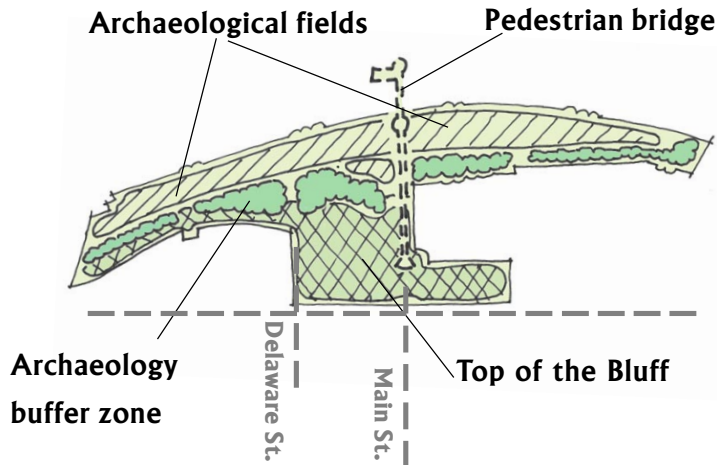
Each sub-area is identified in **Figure 9: Town of Kansas sub-areas**, and described further below.

### Archaeological Fields

As the most intact part of the original Town of Kansas site, this is the heart of the master plan for Town of Kansas. Though there are no remaining intact structures, in the buried ruins of this site, there is an overlay of successive waves of development and redevelopment that occurred throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Key Resources-** Important remnants of the original platted street grid remain, specifically, Main, Delaware, and Commercial Streets. On-site, the visual relationship of the town to the river can still be seen, though the floodwall obscures the view as one nears the river. Together, these elements compose a powerful historic scene that allows the visitor to see the physical framework on which Town of Kansas was built.

**Figure 9:  
Town of Kansas Sub-Areas**



Views and sounds of the still active railroad infrastructure, i.e. the bridges (Hannibal and ASB) and the Missouri and Pacific mainline corridor, remind us of the technological changes that impacted this place as a townsite. The abandoned railroad line along Commercial Street is a further reminder of how new ways of moving goods and people changed this place forever. Archaeological remains, i.e. building foundations and ruins, streets and rights of way, and other material artifacts, round out the story of Town of Kansas. Many have been found and studied, but it is estimated that nearly 80% of the site has not yet been investigated.

**The Archaeological Site Today-** The site is completely overgrown and litter strewn. The principal streets are abandoned and in poor repair for either vehicular or pedestrian use. Evidence of digging and exposed foundations of archaeological investigations is visible in a number of locations. The site is cut off from its river origins by active rail lines and a concrete floodwall. Crisscrossed by a number of utility easements and service lines, the most obtrusive are electric utility lines along Commercial and Main Streets. Noise impact from passing rail traffic is significant.

**Proposed Site Organization-** This is to be a protected, historic area, with controlled access and engaging interpretive elements and activities for the general public.



**Along Commercial Street**

Entry to the site is from the top of the bluff only, via the original street grid. On foot, the visitor would access the site through the Visitor Center. Main and Delaware would be the primary access corridors for visitors arriving by licensed tour vehicles.

Within the site, visitor circulation is primarily along Commercial Street and the railroad right-of-way that extends out along the entire east-west axis of the site. **(Figure 10: Site Organization)** From here, visitors could enter opened archaeological areas, each of which would have its own tailored research and interpretive program. At visit's end they would exit the site via Main, Delaware, or through the Visitor Center.



## Top of the Bluff

Within all of Kansas City, this area ranks high with regard to its potential for redevelopment, both private and public.

This Plan calls for a public belvedere along the top of the bluff, along with a major new Kansas City/Town of Kansas visitor center.

If sufficient interest, energy and funding can be found, this baseline program could be expanded to incorporate a new research/collections institute and/or education center.

**Key Resources-** Main and Delaware Streets top the Bluff in this area. The Gallo's Produce property at the Corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets was the site of the first Jackson County Courthouse. Second Street was the first cross street to sit safely atop the bluff. An historic industrial building at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main Street, on the Republic Fiber property, might be well suited to the research institute and learning center program components described above.

**The Bluff Today-** The era of railroad use of this area is coming to a close. Most major industries have moved out, with the exception of the power generating plant. Redevelopment plans for the Kansas City Southern yard, on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, just west of Delaware are being discussed. A chief concern is a paper products recycling center, Republic Fiber, with heavy truck use. This facility is located on the most strategic site for successful revitalization of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street corridor. Another key property, at the corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, a produce storage facility, also has a major truck loading area fronting the historic Main Street corridor, though it is not heavily used. It is recommended that both be acquired and redeveloped in accordance with the emerging plan. With the removal of railroad lines, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street can be rebuilt to complement the overall redevelopment plan for the Top of Bluff.

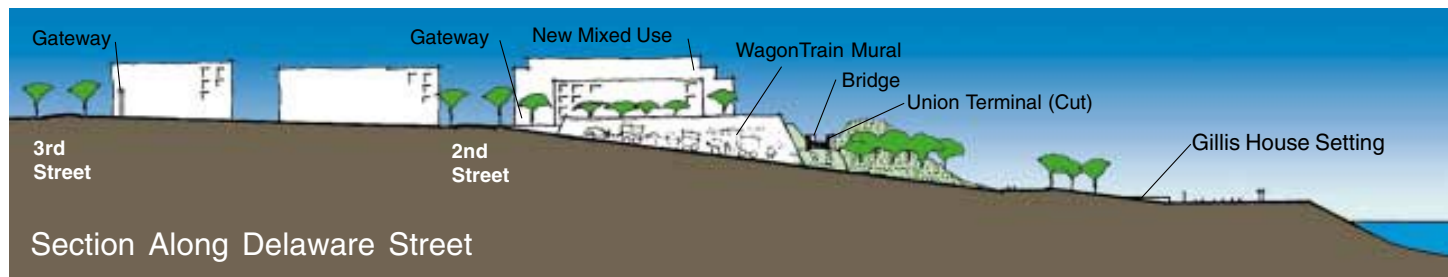
*As seen in Figure 10 : Site Organization, the Master Plan proposes a Town of Kansas Core Area with significant new development along the Top of the Bluff; archaeological and interpretive settings at the base of the Bluff.*

*Circulation is via existing streets, both within the core area and to related sites within the River Market Area.*

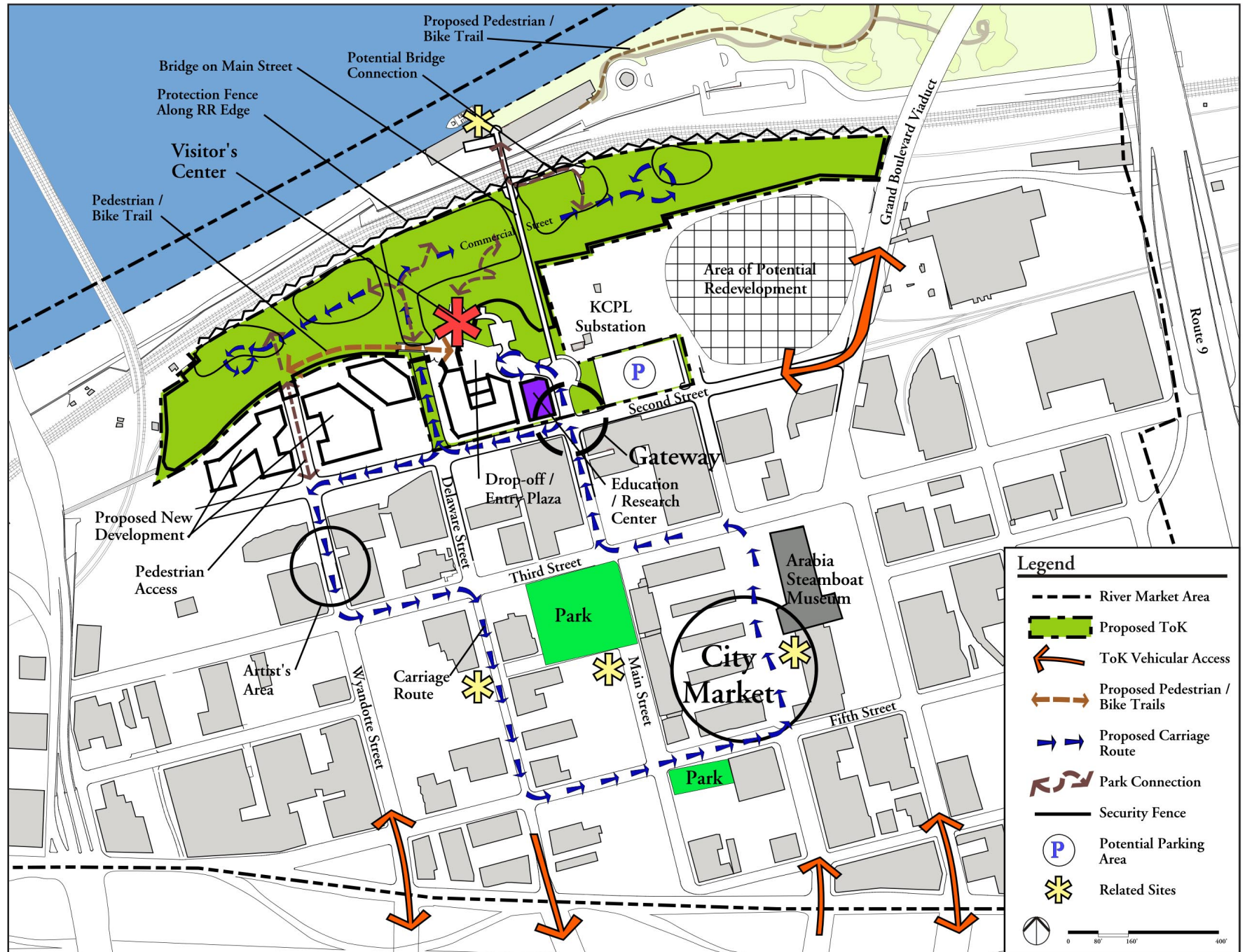
*The proposed pedestrian bridge will link Town of Kansas with its river once again and provide an important set of interpretive venues.*



Proposed Bluff House Site  
seen from West



**Figure 10: Site Organization**





**Proposed Site Organization-** This area includes a number of key sites that are presently not under City control. Their place in the Plan is described below:

*Main/Delaware Block-* Of prime importance is property bounded by 2<sup>nd</sup>, Main, Delaware and the top of the bluff, i.e. the Republic Fiber Co. site. This central site at the top of the bluff has been long viewed as the obvious location for entry, orientation and central interpretation.

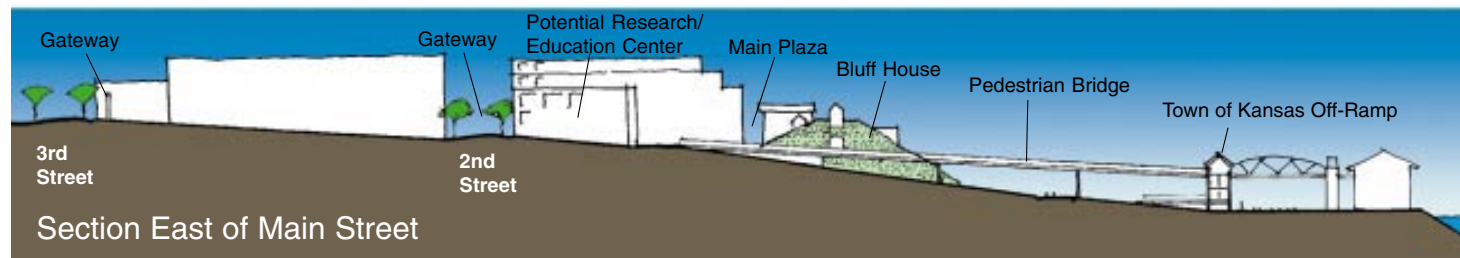
This plan recommends a coordinated, public/private, mixed use development of the site. The predominant use would be a private mixed residential with ground level retail to occupy the bulk of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street edge.

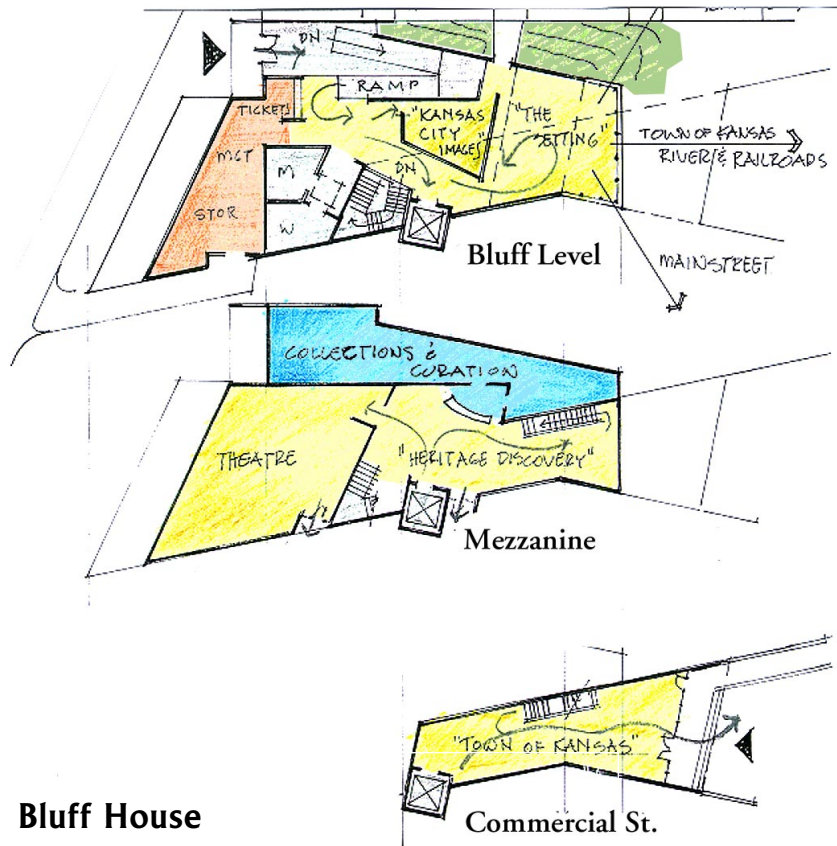
A new Visitor Center with overlook terrace would be sited on this parcel at the north edge of the Bluff.

The new entry gateway with "Bluff House" and Pedestrian Bridge will be the start point for visitors to Town of Kansas.



**Bluff House Illustrative Site Plan**





**Bluff House  
Concept Plans  
(no scale)**

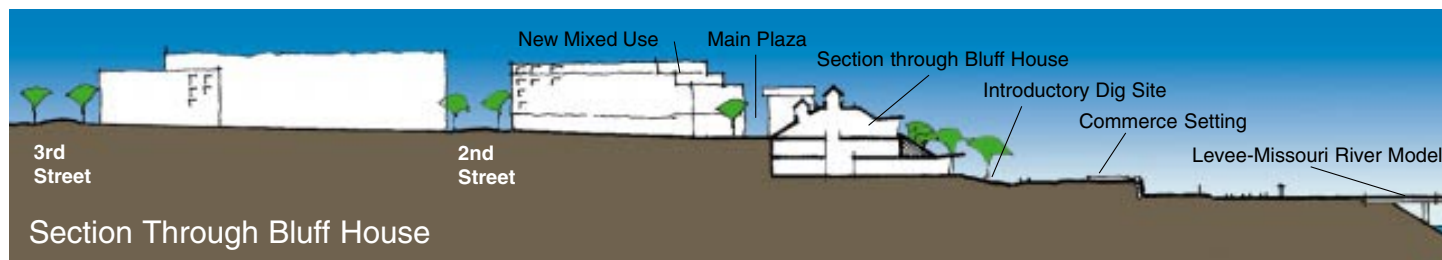
The “Bluff House” Visitor Center will be a key Town of Kansas attraction. This facility should introduce the visitor to Town of Kansas history, as well as to the 21st Century activities of science and discovery that are informing our understanding of the site. The Visitor Center program assumes over 12,000 square feet of orientation, exhibit and administration space, as well as a modest curation\collection component.

As presently conceived, this facility cuts through the bluff and allows visitors to experience the site at four different levels:

- The roof of the Visitor Center not only recalls the early bluffs with buildings perched atop them, but also allows more elevated views over the townsite,
- The “Bluff” level houses visitor services, gift shop, general orientation, a Kansas City retrospective and an overview of the Town of Kansas setting. From here the visitor can exit the building, either onto the bluff or onto the proposed bridge that would carry them to the river’s edge, or descend to the ‘Main Street’ mid-level,
- The mid-level introduces the visitor to the research (both archival and archaeological) and processes of ‘discovery’. In addition to limited Collection and curatorial facilities, this is a prime location for a multi-media theatre. From here the visitor can descend to the ‘Commercial Street’ level,
- The ‘Commercial Street’ level presents Town of Kansas and sets the final stage for the visit to the site. From here the visitor walks out into the heart of the Town of Kansas Archaeological Site.

The architectural style should be powerful, sculptural, and contemporary, while reflecting the scale and character of the early Town of Kansas built environment.

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Turn of the century Republic Fiber property at 2nd and Main might be reused for research and educational programs.

An Expanded Plan might involve an existing early 20<sup>th</sup> century building at the northwest corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets depending on 1) whether or not it is needed for expanded Town of Kansas research and education related uses and 2) if not, whether it should be recycled or torn down as part of an expanded private redevelopment of this site. For example, beyond the “baseline” program set forth above, the master plan can accommodate several far more ambitious programs and facilities. One potential supplemental facility, with precedent in other locations, would be a major center for research and scholarship, created in cooperation with an academic institution or entity. Such a facility might be supportable if additional archaeology reveals great depth of resources on-site, sufficient to support significant scholarship and field study in the issues of frontier town development.

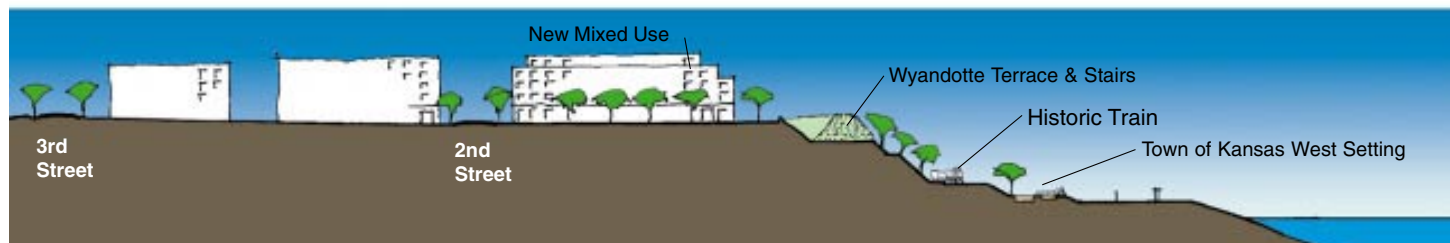
Another potential future development would be a major educational center, catering to primary and/or secondary school students from within the region and, possibly, state wide, offering discovery experiences to learn about early area history as part of larger curriculum efforts. The Tsongas Educational Center, in Lowell, Massachusetts, is an interesting example where creative learning experiences have been designed to serve students who spend several days in residency and benefit from the resource of a National Historical Park site.

*East of Main-* A key site within this area, the Gallo property, at the corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, if acquired as part of the Town of Kansas effort, would be a logical outdoor orientation and tour assembly setting, as well as a convenient site for

visitor parking. Acquisition of this site, which abuts Main Street, would also enable the development of a strong ‘gateway’ experience along this corridor.

The Plan also recommends relocation of the existing Trigen coal yard to a site east of the Grand Boulevard viaduct. Depending upon archaeological testing, this could realize a well-located area around Walnut St. for significant mixed-use development.

*West of Delaware-* The present Kansas City Southern Terminal site west of Delaware, offers a major residential/mixed-use development opportunity within the proposed Special Review District. As part of any redevelopment, the abandoned railroad corridor running



east-west along the edge of the bluff should become a public access way to the Visitor Center, and via a new stairway on the Wyandotte Street axis would allow both neighbors and visitor access to the archaeological site.

With regard to sensitivity towards Town of Kansas, four urban design considerations are recommended for further study:

- building footprints and new streets and rights of way, should reinstate the original 1846 street and block layout,
- buildings should be well set back from the edge of the bluff, with height limits such that they do not overpower the setting,
- new buildings should face the river and the archaeological park, with their edges designed in concert with the evolving park site plan,
- a new linear park link be considered along the westerly edge of the parcel to allow an open space/ bikeway connection back into the River Market Area, at least as far as 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

## The Archaeology Buffer Zone

The steep area between the Top of the Bluff and the Commercial Street/ Chicago & Alton RR corridor slope, though dramatically cut down, still looms over the site. The views looking up from the Commercial/ KC Terminal corridor offers the best opportunity to interpret the challenge that these bluffs posed for early settlers. The slopes appear stable, due in part to the heavy undergrowth; however, if disturbed to open better views, erosion could become a problem.

The Plan suggests that the slopes be fenced, with stabilizing in-fill planting as necessary. Well defined and well controlled access points, will discourage trespassing in this fragile area and onto the Archaeological Fields below.

## The Pedestrian Bridge

The proposed pedestrian bridge, offers unique opportunities to view the archaeological area from above, as well as other possibilities for enhancing the visitor experience including:

- along the approach from City Market, interpreting Main Street's role as the spine up from the river along which Kansas City developed,
- interpretation on the bridge on the rails and sides of the walkway,
- a potential "off ramp" that, from the far end of the bridge, meanders down through a series of 'ghosted' venues to Commercial Street,
- a 'destination' venue at the end of the bridge, in the air and on the ground,
- on the ground below the bridge, use of the bridge structure to support story-telling fabric shelters, exhibit panels, etc.

Looking down  
Main Street



# Yearning Succeeding Adapting

## Interpretive Settings

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**R**elating to visitors the stories of Town of Kansas is a major factor in development of the physical Plan. The match between stories and the setting, i.e. the actual place where the story took place (or its most appropriate venue), drives much of the site design. The narrative is derived from the 'place' and three people-central themes of 'Yearning', 'Succeeding' and 'Adapting'. Outline descriptions of example stories, sub-themes, and initial media recommendations are made for each of the key story telling places described above in **Appendix 1: What Visitors will see and do.**

While themes are presented to the visitor through the lenses of history and archaeology, the primary thrust of the Interpretive Strategy is to engage and query the visitor directly, exploring their own feelings and attitudes around these themes. This is done in both 'Real Time' i.e. why are you here at Town of Kansas today?, as well as in thinking more abstractly about how they would have dealt with the issues and opportunities with which those earlier visitors and settlers had to deal.

The conceptual design for the Town of Kansas (Core Area) is described in **Figure 11: Illustrative Site Plan.** Final determination of facilities and improvements are subject to further archaeological investigations.

The main Interpretive Program is laid out across Town of Kansas:

**Within the Archaeological Fields**, stories are told where they occurred,

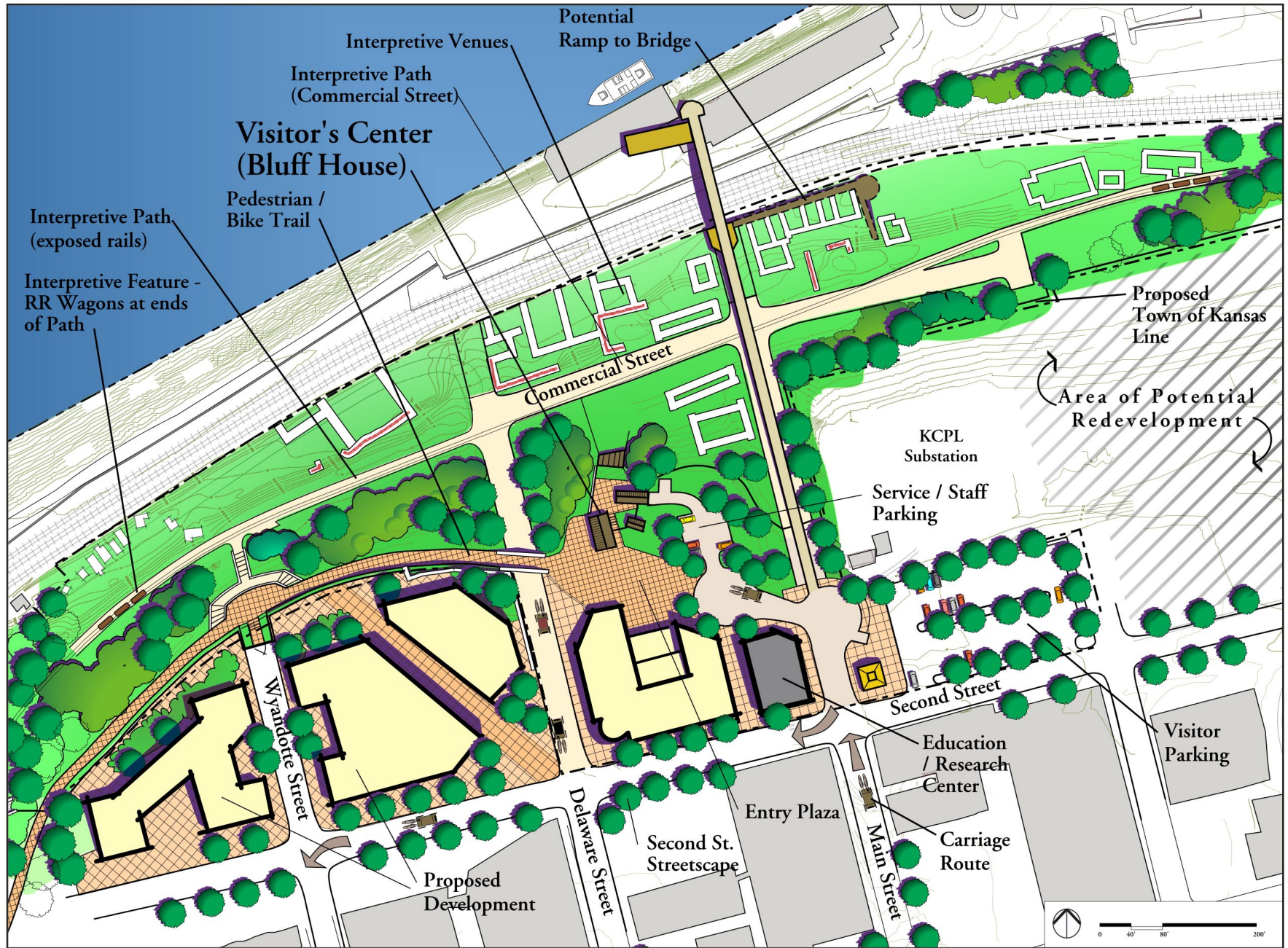
**On the Bluff**, nodes offer an overview of the archaeological setting, the river and the important railroad corridors, including one that cut through the top of the Bluff,

**At the Visitor Center**, a comprehensive indoor and outdoor program orients and educates with sophisticated and interactive media,

**Along the Pedestrian Bridge**, the walk to the river allows both an above-ground view of the site as well as a regional and national perspective.



Figure 11: Illustrative Site Plan





# River Market Area

## Related Story-Telling Settings

The story of Town of Kansas reaches from its earliest beginnings at the edge of the river to the high ground behind the bluff where settlement quickly moved as the young town developed. Today, this area is largely contained within the City's River Market neighborhood. Within this area, there are a number of sites and attractions that provide opportunities for dramatically enhancing Town of Kansas story-telling and the overall visitor's experience. The proposed city wide Kansas City Heritage Corridor will use this area to develop a prototype plan which will be extended throughout the Corridor. While more study is needed to discover all the important settings, specific opportunities thus far identified include:

- **the Levee** (Abandoned Wharf Slab) at the river's edge. The natural landing at this strategic site was the reason for establishing a settlement here in the first place,
- **key Historic Street Corridors**, including Main, Grand and Delaware, along which merchants reigned and people, belongings and goods moved west,
- the historic **City Market and the Arabia Steamboat Museum**, with its wealth of stories and artifacts directly related to Town of Kansas and the steamboat era,
- the **KC Southern railroad yards** which dominated the bluffs and 2<sup>nd</sup> street for more than a century.

## The Levee

Just to the west of the river's edge, the Kansas River merged with the Missouri. Here, the rocky ledge outcrop turned the southward flow of the river to the east and toward the Mississippi. This is where the earliest explorers, traders and settlers first saw the outcrop, the bluffs and the Town of Kansas site and came ashore. The Levee and Front street were center stage for the Town of Kansas mercantile activity.

This plan recognizes the need for a major interpretive and entertainment attraction in the area of the original levee to celebrate this key arrival portal and to provide a secure destination for those using the bridge.



Looking east along the Levee.



Looking west

**Key Resources-** The ledge and rock outcroppings mark this important arrival point. A 20<sup>th</sup> Century wharf slab projects out over the river just west of the former intersection of Main and Front Street. The footprint of a former wharf building on this site provides the opportunity to secure necessary approvals for a significant building redevelopment in the immediate area. All are reminders of the original reasons for settling this location.

**The Levee Today-** For nearly one hundred years, the City has turned its back on its river. Within the past decade major efforts have been forwarded to use the river to draw people and investment back to this area. The casino, riverfront park and plans of a proposed mixed-use, mega-development to the east are in place. The US Army Corps of Engineers is planning an environment-focused park in the area. A bicycle/Multi-use path, with an ambitious multi-path bridge over the Town of Kansas (Core Area) is planned to link the River Market Area with the riverfront park.

**Proposed Site Organization-** This sub-area lies entirely on the river-side of the flood wall. Direct access is prevented by the active rail line and the existing floodwall. The site is narrow and must accommodate the operational and regulatory requirements of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Design and alignment of the bridge should maximize its interpretive value as it crosses the Town of Kansas (Core Area), while minimizing its impact on the historic scene and individual site resources. And as it overlooks the Missouri River; it should provide safe and convenient access from the Bluff to the Levee and it should be an attraction onto itself.

This plan recommends improvements to the wharf slab such that a major component of the Town of Kansas interpretive program can be sited there. The center piece of this venue might be a relief map of the Missouri River Basin. This working model would cover much of the wharf area and interpret the workings of the river, its development history and its future. This attraction should include a full program of demonstrations, reenactments, and special events. Because of the flood prone nature of the site, improvements, equipment, furnishings, set designs and trappings should be 'flood-neutral' or portable.

There is a great need to create a critical mass of activities in this area. The construction of the access ramps off of the new Grand Viaduct is of particular importance to the Levee's long term success. As presently proposed, this must await construction of the second set of lanes on the viaduct, which in turn is tied to future development plans to the east. This policy and the associated phasing plan should be reviewed. It may be that funding could be found for a simple ramp project that could go forward at an accelerated pace, without hindering the larger plan for the riverfront area.

## Key Street Corridors

Leading up from the river, Market, (now Grand), Main and Delaware Streets, bore the tens of thousands of settlers headed west up the bluff and on to Westport and out onto the trails across the prairie. It is along these streets that permanent construction occurred. Within this area, the stories of 'city building' and development of public institutions can best be told.

**Key Resources-** The original east-west numbered streets and north-south named streets remain. Though there are no known examples of pre-Civil War buildings still standing, the Street grid is there. The site of the first County Court house and City Hall lie along Main Street.

**These Streets Today-** Main Street remains a very strong and intact link from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, over the Bluff and down into the Town of Kansas (Core Area). The historic view shed from the top of the Bluff to the River remains open and dramatic. South of 3<sup>rd</sup>, the street has been incorporated into park/open space improvements between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets, adjacent the City Market and an open public parking lot. Further south, Interstate highway construction eliminated Main Street connections to the rest of Kansas City.

Delaware Street is developing into an attractive commercial center for the River Market Area. It is lined with street level shops and restaurants. It is one-way with direct connections south, cross the Interstate, and into downtown Kansas City.

The view up a revitalized Delaware Street.



Walnut Street is an important North/South Street that supported very early development along the Top of Bluff. Currently used as part of a coal storage yard, the street offers direct access from the City Market to Town of Kansas. The site of the present coal yard, with its riverfront location and views offers good potential for future redevelopment.

Grand Avenue is a through-arterial roadway that provides a direct connection into the River Market Area from the other side of the river, passing by the new casino and riverfront park. It also provides a very direct link to and from the Downtown. This is an important 'image-setting' corridor.

**Site Organization-** These Streets tie Town of Kansas to the whole of Kansas City. Along with the City Market, they will be a core component of the proposed Kansas City Heritage Corridor.

A coordinated program would place descriptive plaques on the front facades of existing historic buildings. These would focus on the historical prominence of the given property.

Similarly, a series of Town of Kansas wayside exhibits would be installed at key points along the streets and within the City Market itself. These exhibits would focus on the larger stories of settlement, movement, trading, development of public institutions and ‘city-building’.

The planning effort on Town of Kansas suggests that a ‘Heritage Park on Wheels’, approach might be very appropriate for linking Town of Kansas to other venues within the Heritage Corridor. This approach makes liberal use of ‘period’ vehicles to provide story-telling rides, would offset the loss of historic structures. The Town of Kansas carriage loop would focus on Main and Delaware, with primary stops at the City Market, the Visitor Center and, via Delaware Street, at various locations within the Archaeological Site.

In concert with the ‘Heritage Park on Wheels’ concept, ‘display’ garages might be constructed on available public land, so that the public could see and learn about these vehicles even during non-operating hours. The City Market might serve that function well also.

Finally, key street improvements should be made along Main Street, from City Market to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, to reinforce this corridor as the ‘front walk’ to the Visitor Center, the Archaeological Site and the Bridge to the Levee.



The Steamboat Arabia Museum



## City Market and Arabia Steamboat Museum

The City Market is built near the site of the first public square. A natural spring is in this area. Small ethnic markets and restaurants are flourishing in this City-owned facility. The market has an important history in its own right and is the central focus of the River Market Area today and will be a major node in the proposed Kansas City Heritage Corridor.

The Arabia Steamboat Museum, which lies within the City Market complex, represents an astounding act of 20<sup>th</sup> Century private entrepreneurship, that led to the discovery of a sunken steamboat, with its contents intact, deep in a nearby cornfield. This museum, with its enormous array of artifacts and its stories of life on the river, has very strong historic and interpretive ties to the Town of Kansas.

## The Kansas City Southern Railyards

This area will likely be undergoing major transformation over the next decade as the cycle of 'yearning, succeeding, and adapting' repeats itself again.

While these changes will be for the better, there are stories about the city and its people that focus on this place as an important railroad switching yard.

It is here that one sees clearly how events and technology overtook the original vision of platted streets running down to the river.

As redevelopment occurs building footprints and new streets and rights of way should reinstate the original 1846 Platt map delineating street and block layouts.

Second Street and the Kansas City Southern Railyard.



## Special Review Overlay District

Particular opportunities and concerns exist at a number of sites directly adjacent to the Town of Kansas (Core Area).

- At the waterfront, with cooperative joint planning with the Port Authority and the US Army Corps of Engineers an important destination attraction can be realized.
- Design guidelines for future redevelopment projects at the Kansas City Southern (KCS) site, west of Delaware, to realize development that is integrated with Town of Kansas would enhance both the experience for visitors and the quality of life for those who will be living and working there.
- Both public and private activities along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street all the way to Grand should be closely coordinated to realize a strong Town of Kansas image and improve safety and circulation along this important corridor.
- The Kansas City Power & Light and the Trigen coal yard properties abutting Town of Kansas negatively impact the site. The City needs to work closely with them as future expansions are planned, particularly with regard to eliminating overhead power lines crossing the Town of Kansas core area and removing the current coal yard activities.
- Archaeological investigations should be undertaken as warranted prior to new development within the Overlay District.

## Other Learning Programs

Equally important, this Plan calls for programmatic components which extend into the larger community. These include an interactive Town of Kansas web site, off-site information and story telling at other attractions in the region, and the development of new curriculum units for local schools. These are also described in further detail in **Appendix 1**.

# 5 Implementation

Implementing the Town of Kansas vision represents a very worthwhile, yet complex endeavor. It is key to the rejuvenation of the River Market Area and provides another significant cultural attraction in Kansas City's urban core. Several development, management and operational approaches are possible. On the one hand, Town of Kansas could be wholly City developed and operated. A second option is that it would be developed and run by a well established, existing institution, such as the Kansas City Museum. A third approach is that a new non-profit corporation could be established for the sole purpose of implementing and operating Town of Kansas. Whatever model is decided upon, it is clear that many groups and individuals want Town of Kansas to succeed and therefore, for best results, implementation should be inclusive, allowing long-term participation and commitment from both the public and private sectors.

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## Coordination with Public and Private Initiatives

### Key Agency Stakeholders

The stakeholders surrounding the Town of Kansas site include: the Port Authority; the US Army Corps of Engineers; the State of Missouri (both Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation), other federal agencies, several City agencies (including the City's planning,

economic development and water departments), private businesses, and development interests. These agencies and entities have different goals, areas of influences, funding sources and projects underway that must be coordinated to make development of the Town of Kansas successful.



### **Related Projects in and Adjacent to Town of Kansas**

In order for Town of Kansas to assume a role in the redevelopment of Kansas City's Riverfront and to become a premier regional cultural attraction in its own right, it must interact strategically with other surrounding initiatives under the control of other city, state and federal agencies. These initiatives include area and regional trail development, redevelopment of the surrounding infrastructure at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street at the north edge of the River Market, private redevelopment in the bluff areas including relocation of inappropriate uses, the Riverfront development in the Grand Boulevard area, the construction of a new pedestrian bridge funded by the state and federal agencies under the guidance of the Port Authority of Kansas City and the Port Authority's 50 acre mixed use development site.

### **Adjacent Developers**

Of equal importance will be coordination with numerous privately-owned properties within the River Market Area, since the investments and improvements to be implemented by the private sector can have benefits to the overall district and the Town of Kansas project, and can also benefit from the careful programming and timing of the many public improvements implicit to the project.

### **Potential Cooperators and Project Partners**

A successful Town of Kansas will include long-term partnership arrangements with both development and operational partners. Funding partners, who share the preservation, research, education and area redevelopment vision must be engaged. These include other government entities, such as the State Parks system; institutions such as universities and local colleges, not-for-profit groups, such as the Kansas City Museum and the Learning Exchange; as well as private foundations, interested businesses and individuals. Two specific examples are identified below:

**Research Activities-** This might involve a long-term agreement with a non-profit institution to undertake the initial and extended archaeological work that will be required. The advantage of such an arrangement would include benefit from pre-existing overhead, availability of support curatorial and other technical services, and potential availability of staff and interns for archaeological fieldwork and research at costs substantially below that which would be charged by private sector specialists. This might be of interest to one or more university' history and archaeology programs.

## Development and Operating Costs

**Educational Programs** - The second type of arrangement would deal with actual operation of educational and cultural programs on- and off-site. For the project to be successful, a partnership with an operator whose terms of reference and mission are closely associated with this subject matter would be strongly advisable. Two potential resources for such activities within the region are the Learning Exchange, which might be a potential cooperator during the short- or long-term, and the Kansas City Museum, whose mission overlaps considerably with the type of resources and educational opportunities that would be available at Town of Kansas.

**Capital Improvements:** A “Baseline” development program has been developed and discussed in Section 4. In addition to a complete site development program, this “Baseline” program proposes a new Visitor Center facility, “Bluff House”, as a primary component of the Master Plan. This facility houses a variety of visitor services and a series of interpretive exhibits and attractions (see Appendix 1). In addition, this facility includes a modest curation and collections program in support of on-site archaeological activities, as well as a very small educational component. The program requirements for this facility are summarized in **Table 1: Summary Core Space Program, Bluff House** below and detailed in Appendix 2.

**Table 1: Summary Bluff House Core Space Program**

Research/Education Facility	1,728 sq. ft.
Visitor Facilities Program	8,286 sq. ft.
Administrative and Support Areas	2,081 sq. ft.
<b>Total, Gross Area (SF)</b>	<b>12,094 sq. ft.</b>

**Table 2: Town of Kansas Baseline Plan Preliminary Capital Improvements Cost Estimate** presents an estimate of capital construction cost for the ‘baseline’ plan for Town of Kansas, excluding site acquisition and assembly. The total construction cost, including contingency and allowance for escalation, is estimated to be approximately \$14.4 million.

**Operating Costs: Table 3: Town of Kansas Baseline Plan Preliminary Operating Pro Forma** indicates an estimate of operations and revenue costs for the proposed “Baseline” Town of Kansas program. These costs include staff salaries, operating costs, program development costs and projected revenues for the same three program options. Also, the interim program operating budget has projected. The assumption is that, during hours of operation, the site would be accessible to the public but a fee would be charged for the Visitor Center and its key facilities. Additional feature activities (for example, audio devices on site) might be restricted to those who have paid an entry fee, while leaving the site more generally accessible. This estimate is not intended to constitute a feasibility or operations assessment; however, it does provide a range of possible variables and parameters that might be considered in future feasibility studies.

**Table 2: Town of Kansas Baseline Plan Preliminary Capital Improvements Cost Estimate** ( YR 2000 dollars)

<b>Bluff House/Overlook</b>					
1	Assume Base Building Cost			\$ 200 /sf	2,418,880
2	Assume Exhibits Area, ADD			\$ 300 /sf	1,121,400
3	Relocate Overhead Utilities (Bluff /Commercial/Main)	9	Poles	\$ 20,000 /Pole	180,000
4	Site Improvements (Bluff)	30000	sf	\$ 30 /sf	900,000
					4,620,280
				Design and Contingency set aside 30%	1,386,084
					<b>6,006,364</b>
<b>Archaeological Park</b>					
1	Early Action (Clean/Stabilize/Secure)	299999	sf	\$ 0.50 /sf	150,000
2	Site Landscape	300000	sf	\$ 12 /sf	3,600,000
3	On-site interpretive structures	4	ea	\$ 100,000 /ea	400,000
4	Exhibits/Etc	12	Stations	\$ 20,000 /lf	240,000
					4,390,000
				Design and Contingency set aside 30%	1,317,000
					<b>5,706,999</b>
<b>Second Street Reconstruction</b>					
1	Roadway/Sidewalks/Lighting	1200	lf	140 /lf	168,000
2	Street Trees	40	Trees	500 ea	20,000
3	Interpretive Elements	1	Allow	10,000 LS	10,000
					198,000
				Design and Contingency set aside 30%	59,400
					<b>267,400</b>
<b>River Market Area</b>					
1	Historic Structures Plaques	15	ea	\$ 500 /ea	7,500
2	Wayside Exhibits	10	ea	\$ 2,000 /ea	20,000
3	On-site interpretive structures	8	ea	\$ 50,000 /ea	400,000
					427,500
				Design and Contingency set aside 30%	128,250
					<b>555,750</b>
					12,536,513
				Future Value Adjustment, (5 year Implementation) Add 15%	1,880,477
					<b>14,416,990</b>
<b>Acquisition ( to be determined)</b>					
1	Republic Bluff				
2	Republic Historic Building				
3	Gallo Site				
4	Misc. Slope and RR properties				
5	Electrical Utility Easements				

As seen in **Table 3**, operating costs for the “Baseline” program range from an opening year deficit of \$246,000 to a potential surplus of an equivalent amount, when the operation has reached an attendance of 150,000 per year in Year 10.

**An Expanded Plan:** Beyond the “Baseline” program, as described in Section 4, the master plan can accommodate several far more ambitious research and educational programs and facilities. While possible and even desirable, these would require significantly greater funding and major donor support for construction and operations. Depending upon the scope and depth of the expanded program, the total project budget could easily double to more than \$30 million, with equivalent increases in the operating costs.

**Table 3: Town of Kansas Baseline Plan Preliminary Operating Pro Forma ( YR 2000 dollars)**

		Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Archaeology</b>											
Archival work and site documentation	\$70.0										
Field season 1			\$126.0								
Continuing field archaeology				\$46.7	\$48.1	\$49.5	\$38.2	\$39.4	\$40.6	\$41.8	\$43.0
Visitor Center Staff			\$77.2	\$149.8	\$290.92	\$299.7	\$308.6	\$317.9	\$327.4	\$337.3	\$347.4
Other Program Costs	\$25.0	\$51.50	\$103.0	\$154.5	\$159.14	\$163.91	\$168.83	\$173.89	\$179.11	\$184.48	
<b>Building Operating Costs</b>			\$68.4	\$132.91	\$136.90	\$141.01	\$145.24	\$149.59	\$154.08	\$158.70	
<b>Total Base Annual Costs</b>		\$95.0	\$254.7	\$367.9	\$626.4	\$645.2	\$651.8	\$671.4	\$691.5	\$712.2	\$733.6
<b>Assumed attendance</b>											
Adult				21,000	42,000	50,400	60,480	63,504	66,679	70,013	73,514
School groups				21,000	42,000	50,400	60,480	63,504	66,679	70,013	73,514
<b>Assumed Fees</b>											
Adult	\$7.00			\$147.0	\$294.0	\$352.8	\$423.4	\$444.5	\$466.8	\$490.1	\$514.6
School groups	\$4.00			\$84.0	\$168.0	\$201.6	\$241.9	\$254.0	\$266.7	\$280.1	\$294.1
Concessions (10% of sales)	\$2.50			\$10.5	\$21.0	\$25.2	\$30.2	\$31.8	\$33.3	\$35.0	\$36.8
<b>Total Revenue</b>				\$241.5	\$483.0	\$579.6	\$695.5	\$730.3	\$766.8	\$805.2	\$845.4
<b>Annual Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>		(\$95.0)	(\$254.7)	(\$126.4)	(\$143.4)	(\$65.6)	\$43.7	\$58.9	\$75.3	\$92.9	\$111.8
<b>Cumulative Surplus (Deficit)</b>		(\$95.0)	(\$349.7)	(\$476.1)	(\$619.5)	(\$685.1)	(\$641.4)	(\$582.4)	(\$507.1)	(\$414.2)	(\$302.4)



# Funding

Funding for this project will likely be a combination of city, state and federal funding, as well as foundation and other charitable donations. Sources will vary depending upon the targeted use.

Capital funding for design, construction and installation funding should be available from the City; from the Tax Increment Financing plan that has been approved for the River Market Area; TIF revenues from adjacent related Bluff development; from the Public Improvement Advisory Committee (PIAC); on an

annual basis from the City’s general fund and through specific grants for development and/or programs for Town of Kansas.

The following summary of funding indicates that amounts possibly forthcoming from transportation enhancement funding, foundation grants, and city general funding may vary. Based on discussion of the project’s scope and consequences, discussions should take place among key actors to derive a final aggregate estimate. Limited funding is available from the National

Park Service if Town of Kansas is certified as a NPS Santa Fe Trail Site. There are also opportunities for special funding from the State of Missouri or the federal government in a similar manner to funding of the pedestrian bridge and site cleanup on the Port Authority’s 50 acre development site. Sources of funds that might be considered for the project include, but would not necessarily be limited to those shown in **Table 4: Key Funding Sources**.

**Table 4: Key Funding Sources**

• Tax Increment Financing from River Market Area has been approved (Land acquisition, Second Street Improvements, Parking)	\$ 700,000
• Tax Increment Funding from Bluff Development (Assumes 100,000 S.F. development @ \$3.00/ SF)	\$3,000,000
• PIAC Funding (Proposed) (Public Improvements)	\$1,340,000
• Transportation Enhancement Funding (Heritage Trail, Bikeway and pedestrian linkages)	\$ varies
• Foundation Grants (source and purpose may vary, by donor)	\$ varies
• National Park Service (requires certification and adherence to NPS standards)	\$ varies
• Special funding (legislative appropriation from state or city)	\$ varies

# Phasing and Early Actions

**Table 5: Town of Kansas Phasing Concept** shows the conceptual schedule for implementation of the Town of Kansas project. This exhibit also illustrates overall development schedules for related adjacent development including the Heritage Trail, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street linkages, Bluff development, Riverfront development, pedestrian bridge, and possibly the Research Institute and the Learning Center (should the ‘Expanded Plan’ option be pursued by the City).

As illustrated in the schedule, it is clear that while each of the above projects is on a different course that many of the improvements contemplated and discussed can be implemented concurrently with the Town of Kansas development, several of them prior to completion of the interim site development and most of them prior to completion of the Core Town of Kansas program. Longer term strategic development such as the site vehicular access to the Riverfront, the commercial development on the Port Authority’s 50 acres and the Research Institute and Learning Center are by nature longer-term projects that most likely will be completed after the Core Program Development is complete. It is important, again, to state that as many of these related projects as possible should be coordinated with and completed concurrently to the Town of Kansas project.

**Table 5: Town of Kansas Phasing Concept**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
<b>Archaeological Program</b>							
Archival Research	■						
Field Survey and Historical Map	■	■					
Season 1: Key Areas		■	■	■	■	■	■
Ongoing Field Archaeology			■	■	■	■	■
Curation	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
<b>Site and Facility Development</b>							
<i>Town of Kansas Site</i>							
Scope and implement early action in core area	■	■					
Clear overgrowth, stabilize, secure	■	■					
Stage 1 permanent improvements			■	■			
Stage 2 permanent improvements					---	---	---
<i>The Bluff</i>							
Scope and implement early action in core area	■	■					
Temporary storefront		■	■				
Acquire Republic Paper and relocate	■	■	■				
Site preparation and related			■				
Bluff House Design		■	■	■			
Bluff House Visitor Center and site			■	■			
Coordinate with private development	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
<i>The Levee</i>							
Resolve bridge location, details	■						
Bridge final design	■	■	■				
Bridge completion		■	■	■			
Coordinate river uses, improvements	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
<i>Key Street Corridors</i>							
Scope all improvements		■	■				
Phase I installation			■	■			
Phase II installation				■	■		
<b>Interpretation and Educational Program</b>							
Initial Interim Outreach Programs		■	■	■			
Scope and Design Exhibits			■	■			
Exhibit Installation				■			
On-going educational programs	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
<b>Trail Development</b>							
Finalize Initial Phase	■						
Secure Funding & Approvals		■	■				
Design and Construction			■	■			
<b>Second Street Linkages</b>							
Secure TIF/ PIAC Funding	■						
Design		■	■				
Construction			■	■			
<b>Riverfront Development/ Grand Blvd</b>							
Secure Funding & Approvals	■	■					
Design and Construction of Wetlands		■	■				
Design/ Construction of Vehicular Access			■	■	■		
RFP for Operator of Entertainment Venue					■	■	
<b>Pedestrian Bridge Development</b>							
Memorandum of Agreement	■						
Finalize and Obtain Design Approval		■	■				
Property Acquisition			■				
Final Design and Construction			■	■	■		
<b>Operations and Management</b>							
Site control and interim city management	■	■	■				
Archeology, through cooperative agreement	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Interim educational program management		■	■	■	■		
Long-term institutional management					■	■	■

## In conclusion...

It is clear that funding may be developed incrementally especially to allow the interim components of the “Baseline” Program to be completed over the next 24 months. A key issue is that, even assuming the lowest cost ‘Baseline’ scenario, there is a significant gap with no available funds identified to cover the ultimate cost of completing the project. This is true even given that the above projected budgets assume that the Bluff property can be acquired and resold for development and then will be used to create a tax increment that can be bonded and used for facility development.

Interest in this project is mounting. The need for preservation of this resource is obvious. A rich and diverse set of visitor experiences can be developed, at this place, around the core themes of “Yearning”, “Succeeding” and “Adapting”.

**Themes:**

☐ Yearning ☐ Succeeding ☐ Adapting

**Location:**

**Seen from distance**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**1**

## Major Visual Site Feature

**Media:**

- **Prominent site  
identification feature**
- **Dramatic nighttime  
illumination**
- **Significant historic  
supergraphic wall  
mural**

**The Story:**

Highlight the site location, suggesting admiration for what took place along the original shoreline and along the bluff.

Examples can be found within Kansas City's own historic past, such as in this photograph of Electric Park.





**Themes:**

☐ Yearning ☐ Succeeding ☐ Adapting

**Location:**

**Entry Plaza**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**2**

## Site Portal

*A gate, archway or specially-marked boundary can help define (and secure) the site.*

**Media:**

- **Major gateway**
- **Site identification icon or character**

**The Story:**

Identify the Town of Kansas Core Area and entry



**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Entry Plaza**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**3**

## Introduction to the Site and The Story

*Signs need not be static.  
Animated "whirleygig" devices  
can inform and amuse visitors.*

**Media:**

- **Directory of visitor services, tours and programs**
- **Site maps and model**
- **Take-away site guide**
- **Brochures for special events and other attractions**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**
- **Live Staff**

**The Story:**

**YEARNING:**

*What do people want?* Guidance

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What will it take?* Clear, intelligible (and hopefully, fun) information.

**ADAPTING:**

*How to accommodate diverse audiences?*  
Provide a variety of ways to visit Town of Kansas.

At the Entry Plaza every visitor will be welcomed and shown how they can create an individually-tailored visit plan to match their own interest level and the amount of time they have to spend.

It is here that people will be provided their first glimpse of the developments that have taken place during the past 150 years at Town of Kansas

They will also be able to view vivid, animated descriptions of the past, current and future site development plans. and be introduced to various pathways and media options through which they can experience Town of Kansas.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning** ☒ **Succeeding** ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

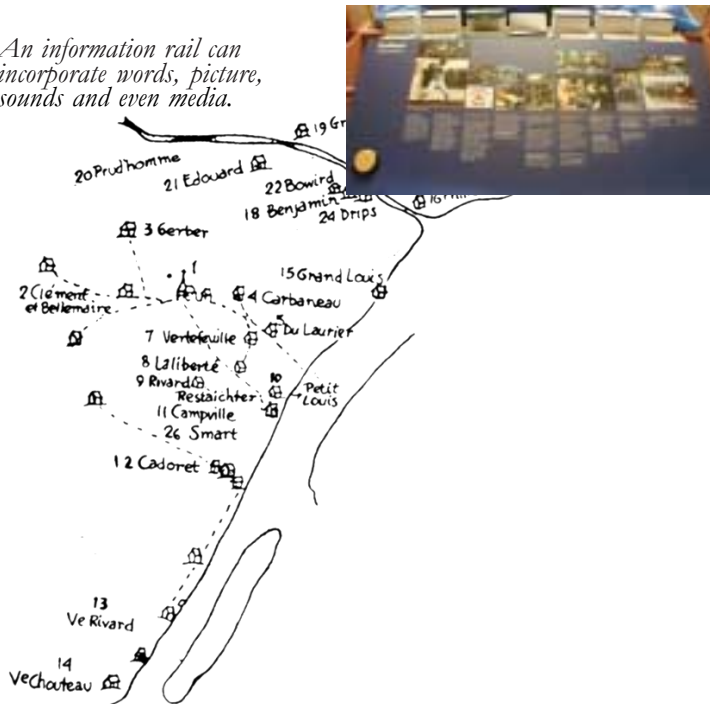
**Entry Plaza**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**4**

# Introduction to The Themes: Yearning; Succeeding; Adapting

*An information rail can  
incorporate words, picture,  
sounds and even media.*

**Media:**

- **Site-History Models**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**
- **Graphic Information**  
**Rails surrounding the models would include images, diagrams and maps highlighting key movements across the united States, including the Santa Fe Trail, Early American and European Immigration, Lewis and Clark's journey and Indian Relocation Act**
- **All exterior structures to be Fiberglas or bronze, assuring durability in the face of weather and vandalism**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

Answer the question - *What happened here?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

Answer the question - *What's going on here now?*

**ADAPTING:**

Provide visit options for daytime and evening, weekdays and weekends, at all seasons.

We propose to illustrate the original geography, setting, bounds and features of the country, region and Town of Kansas, with comparison to today's evident features.

We think this is best understood, not as pictures, but as a series of physical models.

Information rails surrounding the models would include other graphics and highlight key movements across the united States, including the Santa Fe Trail, Early American and European Immigration, Lewis and Clark's journey and Indian Relocation Act.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Commercial near Walnut**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**5**

**Site Tour –**

# Natural Features

*Elevated walkways need not be  
at tree-top height. Even several  
inches above the ground can  
vcreate a sense of awe.*

**Media:**

- **Restored habitat enclave and landscape possibly including live animals within a restored environment**
- **Descriptions from early explorers' letters**
- **Historic illustrations and views**
- **Whirligig or other animated display**
- **Animal-themed climb-on play structure**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**
- **Hands-On Activity**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*What would you like to see here?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What used to survive here? What failed?*

**ADAPTING:**

*What does it take to restore the environment?*

**NATURAL ABUNDANCE.** Some visitors will be astounded to consider what might have been here back in the Pleistocene era, when the Nebraskan and Kansan glaciers shifted on top of the Pennsylvanian-age bedrock. The glaciers flowed by this site, creating a deep valley stream, depositing clay, gravel and boulders into tall bluffs, along what became the Missouri River. Through analysis of the soil conditions, scientists suggest that the original woodland and prairie at this site included hickory, oak elm, basswood, and black walnut trees, along with flood-tolerant species such as elm and cottonwood and tall Indian and Switch grasses, and a wide variety of herbaceous plants. ToK was a perfect place to hunt, trap and trade. It is probable that bison, elk, deer, bears, wolves, beaver, turkey, geese and ducks roamed the site along with a wide variety of fish, amphibians and mussels.



**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Commercial east of Main**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**6**

**Site Tour –**

# Early Settlement



**Media:**

- **Hunting and trapping exhibit**
- **Historical remarks regarding use of animals for clothing, pets, sustenance**
- **Display of goods that would have been found at this site**
- **Caravan of covered wagons**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:**

**YEARNING:**

*What did people value? FUR!*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What does it take? Skill and daring, diplomacy and business sense.*

**ADAPTING:**

*What happened to the desire for fur? Other commodities became more valuable.*

Companies were established to send hunters and trappers in support of a huge fur trade, which in turn led to the creation of major trading posts, a river landing and levee, additional settlers and warehouses. The construction of a larger settlement emerged as the town became the major crossroad for Santa Fe, Oregon and Gold Rush trails. Later, the trading of grain and livestock replaced fur, and the city continued to prosper based on its role as a trading route.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Riverfront Landing**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**7**

**Site Tour –**

# The Riverfront

**Media:**

- **Recreation of landing, as original levee**
- **Actor/waiters provide third-person historic interpretation**
- **Scenes of steamboats loading, and discharging goods**
- **Weekend/summer dinner theater**
- **A novel fountain that evokes the excitement of numerous boats coming and going (possibly developed as a competition sponsored by Corp of Engineers?)**
- **Sol e Lumiere evening light show celebrates river commerce**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Where do you want to go? What kind of goods do you want?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What 's a good way to transport people and goods? The river.*

**ADAPTING:**

*Did the river remain the best way to travel and to ship goods?*

With continued western expansion, the Town of Kansas boomed as an outfitting point, according to 1853 account of William Chick, "...sometimes there were as many as a dozen steamers at the wharf during the day from above and below. I have seen as many as 5000 tons of merchandise stored on the Levee covered with tarpaulins because no room could be found in the warehouses...we have loaded as many as 300 large wagons containing 6000 pounds in one day. There are at least three other large concerns besides ours. We often had eight or ten trains loading at a time, and this would continue as long as daylight lasted".

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Commercial and  
Delaware**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**8**

**Site Tour –**

# Grand Visions

**Media:**

- **Missouri River model**
- **Electronic Senator Benton**
- **Historic photos, illustrations, maps and views from historic atlases**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*What do you expect to do in this millennium? How far would you go to do it? What would you risk? Are your wishes for yourself? Other people?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*How do you measure success? Owning things? Doing things? Going places? Building things?*

**ADAPTING:**

*Why not let things stay the way they are? What's new in your life? Did you feel the same way last year? What's changed in your life?*

In a City Council speech in 1854, Senator Thomas Hart Benton (the great-uncle of the 20th Century artist), said "...Here where the Missouri, after running its southward course for nearly 2,000 miles, turns eastward to the Mississippi, a large commercial and manufacturing community will congregate and in less than a generation we will see a great city on these hills." The hills were leveled in less than a generation. The great city is still evolving.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Commercial between  
2nd St. and Delaware**

**Interpretive  
Element #****9****Site Tour –**

# Cutting Down The Bluffs

**Media:**

- **Visitors pass under railroad trestle between two huge flanking walls (KC Southern Yard embankment, Republic Paperboard Recycling facility) representing cross-section of site's original bluff, before it was excavated.**
- **Repainted wall murals depict horse-drawn commercial traffic on Delaware Street 150 years ago**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*What do you think of the place you live? Is it just the way you want it to be? What would you change it? Can you imagine actually trying to do that? Why? Why not?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What does it take to make a change in your own situation? Money? Power? Permission?*

**ADAPTING:**

*Who has to approve? What if they don't agree? How can you get to do what you want to do? What if you don't get your way?*

**FLOODS AND THE BLUFF** - Following a major flood in 1844, which swept away almost everything at the foot of Front Street, a levee was built using old building rubble and dirt removed from the bluffs above. This created a more dependable landing, but the bluffs towering above the landing still presented a tremendous obstacle to moving people and goods to and the river. In an extraordinarily brash and confident manner, beginning in 1857 four streets were cut right through the bluffs. And when additional riverfront land was needed, the bluffs were simply leveled.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Main Bet  
Wyandotte/Delaware**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**10**

**Site Tour –**

# Building Boom

**Media:**

- **Wayside touch screen kiosk-based historic video**
- **Live first-person street theater**
- **Wayside text and audio narrative descriptions from early explorers' letters**
- **Historic illustrations and views**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*What do you miss? What do you need?  
What do you want?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*Is it up to you? Are some people just luckier? Does hard work pay off? What risks are worth taking? Is bigger better? Worse?*

**ADAPTING:**

*If you get your way does that mean someone else doesn't get their way? Are things fair?*

1857 to 1859 was an amazing time for the city. In just two years the population went from 478 to 8,000 inhabitants! This coincided with the opening of the Kansas Territory, bringing a huge influx of entrepreneurs who saw an opportunity to cash in on the outfitting of these new settlers. These included banks, merchants, inn and hotel-keepers. The Gillis House was purchased by the New England Emigrant Aid Society, and dozens of residences and businesses began to expand up the bluffs, beyond the riverfront. The local economy thrived surpassing its nearby rivals, Westport and Independence.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Front & Delaware**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**11**

**Site Tour –**

# Gillis House Site

**Media:**

- **Video and live first-person street theater reenactments with sentiments about westward yearnings, traveling conditions and pro versus anti-slavery movement**
- **Using a simple balloting device, visitors will be asked to take sides on several issues dealing with their own beliefs and values**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:**

**YEARNING:** *When you travel, do you stop enroute? What kind of place do you like to stay in? How do you feel about sharing a dining room table? bathroom? A bedroom? A bed?*

**SUCCEEDING:** *What matters to you? Do you care if you are rich? Famous? Beautiful? Considered Smart? Brave? Reasonable? Fair?*

**ADAPTING:** *What would you put up with to get what you want? Discomfort? Financial risk? Danger?*

Until the late 1850's most of Kansas City was concentrated between the river and the Third Street bluffs, some of which were 100 feet high. The first real hotel was the Gillis House (sometimes called Troost or Gillis Hotel), and it was a four-story, 60-room brick structure right at the edge of the river. In the 1850's as immigrants arrived with the intention of filling Kansas with anti-slavery voters as quickly as possible, the ToK became a hotbed of pro and anti-slavery activity. The Union (later Gillis) Hotel became a rendezvous for both pro and anti-slavery activists.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

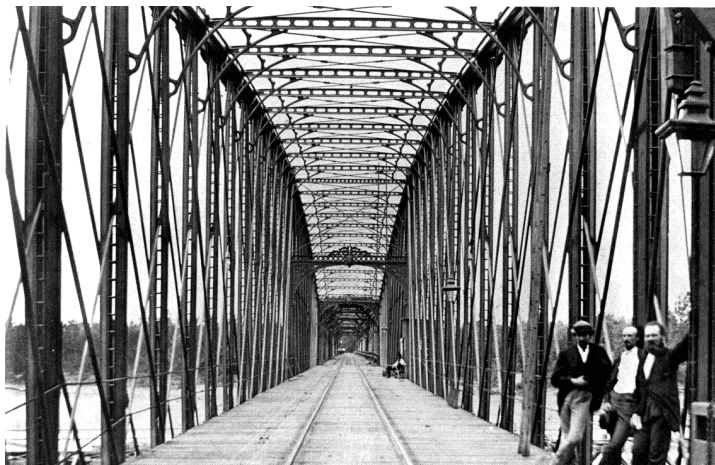
**Bluff overlooking west  
of site**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

# 12

**Site Tour –**

# The Railroads Arrive

**Media:**

- **Trains parked below**
- **Information rail panels describe development of West Bottoms, abandoned railroad cut, transient worker plight and other successful and failed efforts**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Where did your breakfast come from? How did it get to here? What if it took twice as long to arrive? Or cost twice or four times as much by the time it got here? How about your favorite possession?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*Where do you plan to go next? How are you going to get there? Is there a better way? Can you go that way? Why?*

**ADAPTING:**

*What would you do to get what you want delivered safely? How about twice as fast?*

By the 1890's the railroads had replaced steamboats for hauling goods, diminishing the economic value of riverfront property, while a tremendous spurt of development spurred the creation of grain elevators, milling operations and cattle stockyards. Thereafter, little more was built on the floodplain that had been the heart of commercial Town of Kansas. By this time the West Bottoms at Town of Kansas had become known as Hobo Hill as a haven for tramps, a dog pound, and other less-fortunate displaced souls.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning   ☒ Succeeding   ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Wyandotte Terrace**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**13**

**Site Tour –**

# Artistic Visions

**Media:**

- **Seasonal art exhibits**
- **Plaza with historically-themed sculpture**
- **Overlook with information rail portraying work of artists associated with the site and ToK themes**
- **Historic-themed Inn?**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*What's your most cherished object? Do you know who made it? Do you care?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*Do you know how to make anything? Why do you make it?*

**ADAPTING:**

*Who should decide what you make? What if you couldn't make what you want?*

150 years ago the Town of Kansas was the portal to this entire region and the country beyond. For most of the last 100 years highways, bridges and railroads have hemmed in the site, to the point where it is become a barely-visible, remote cul-de-sac, accessible only on foot along steeply-graded, rutted thoroughfares. In the next century we propose that the area between Second and third Streets at Wyandotte be further enhanced as an Artists Landing, where visitors and residents would convene around additional artists' housing, at new restaurants, cafes, bookstores, galleries, gift shops and artists' studios.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Bridge Entry**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**B 1**

From Bridge –

# Significance of Location

**Media:**

- **Framed antique camera views towards east and west**
- **Wayside text and audio narrative descriptions from early explorers' letters**
- **Historic illustrations and views**
- **Topographical site model (on nearby Plaza)**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Why do you live where you do? Will you always live there? Why?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*Where would you really like to go? What's stopping you? How long are you willing to wait to get there?*

**ADAPTING:**

*What if someone you want to be with has a different idea? What if you can't get there? Are you good at convincing others to go along with you? Are you willing to "go along"?*

**THE STRATEGIC LOCATION** - The earliest settlement of the Town of Kansas area extends back to prehistoric times, when Native Americans were attracted to the rich environment, and recognized the importance of the confluence of the Kansas River with the Missouri River. In 1804, Lewis and Clark noted that "...the river junction would make an excellent location for a fort", and for the same reason, European explorers and fur trappers established fur trading posts here.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Bridge Information Rails**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**B2**

From Bridge –

# Site Development Timeline

**Media:**

- **Information Handrail incorporates walk-thorough historical timeline and interactive quiz devices, highlighting key site events and influences in an engaging manner**
- **Key vantage points (crossing the bluffs; passing the site of former stables; crossing the railroad right of way; arriving short of the original shoreline), visitors gain birds-eye view of changes that occurred at the site**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:**

YEARNING:

*Who came here? Why?*

SUCCEEDING:

*Wheat did they do here?*

ADAPTING:

*Why did they stay? Why did they go?*

The long expanse of bridge walkway offers an opportunity to chronicle the ToK's riverfront development. "Outbound" on the east-facing handrail pedestrians will be able to follow a timeline describing, in words and pictures, the Initial Habitation, Commercial Development, Industrial Growth, Industrial Decline and Site Abandonment story of ToK. Turning back towards town, along the west-facing railing visitors will be able to view ToK events overlaid with the dramatic changes which were occurring simultaneously throughout the country, including the 19th Century population shifts, and the country's transformation towards industrialization, as machine power overtook hand-labor.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Bridge Pod Overlook**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**B3**

From Bridge –

# Competition and Adaptation

**Media:**

- **Bridge overlook with framed antique camera views towards east and west**
- **Info rail describes ToK in context with other river cities**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Is your home town "The Best"? Would you leave? Why?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*Wheat makes another place more appealing?*

**ADAPTING:**

*Do you ever want to go away? What places attract you? How good are you at "staying put"? If your house flooded would you rebuild in the same place?*

River cities up and down the Missouri (and elsewhere) share certain features in common with the Town of Kansas, including the universal pattern of establishing settlements at river junctions, development of water-borne commerce, periodic flooding, and when successful, the ultimate expansion of population centers beyond the banks of the river. Often, proximate cities compete for suppliers and consumers. with the advantage tilting towards the location that offers the safest, or most cost-effective opportunity for business success.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Bridge Tower Platform**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**B4**

From Bridge –

# Steamboats to Railroads

**Media:**

- **Vintage railroad cars below, with associated exhibits relating to cattle, wheat and commerce on information rail**
- **Historic photos, illustrations, maps and views**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Don't you just love carrying big packages? How about for long distances? Could you give it up?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*Do you look for shortcuts? Convenient parking spaces? Safe places to travel. Good. Now you're thinking just like a professional shipper?*

**ADAPTING:**

*What would you do if a delivery person kept breaking your gifts or losing your packages?*

Steam-powered railroads challenged the riverboats as the most efficient way to transport goods, dramatically altering the city's orientation, and dependence upon, the river. Suddenly, railroads could facilitate distribution of huge crops of Mennonite-grown Turkey-Red wheat while at the same time entrepreneurs were clever enough to build the first bridge across the Missouri, the Hannibal Bridge, to carry Texas cattle to West Bottoms stockyards. Both wheat and cattle soon far surpassed fur in sparking Kansas city's tremendous commercial success.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**The Landing**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**B5**

## Floods and the ToK

**Media:**

- **Water erosion stream table**
- **Historical maps and flood timeline**
- **Historic flood height markers**
- **Wayside text, pictorial and audio narrative descriptions from Chouteau family's correspondence and from later newspaper flood accounts**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Why did people live near the river? Why don't they?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What makes good riverside living or working?*

**ADAPTING:**

*What if your not happy with your riverside life?*

*What would you do?*

The RIVER and recurring FLOODS have played a central role in the evolution of the ToK. It was a devastating flood in 1826 that destroyed the warehouse and cabins of fur trader Pierre Chouteau, causing his family to move to a site near ToK at the confluence of the two rivers.

This was but one of the rmajor flood events that altered the landscape and economic destiny of Tok.

This landing could offer a site at which youngsters (and grownups), could experiment with the force of water and the way nature takes its course.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning   ☒ Succeeding   ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**In The River**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**B6**

# The Missouri River

**Media:**

- **Audio Tour Node  
Bridge overlook with  
views to the east and  
west**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node Info  
rail describing ToK in  
context with other  
river cities**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:**

YEARNING:

*What drew people to settle by the river?*

SUCCEEDING:

*What made this place so special?*

ADAPTING:

*Where changed? What did people go  
instead?*

The Missouri Basin covers about one sixth of the united States, and it is not surprising that it has been and will continue to be a pivotal feature in Kansas City's destiny. The view from the levee at the end of the new pedestrian bridge will provide an appropriate location to describe past and continuing efforts to tame the river for flood control, farmland irrigation, production of hydroelectric power and for navigation. Those are the river issues that have brought – and taken away – huge fortunes from Kansas City.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning   ☒ Succeeding   ☒ Adapting

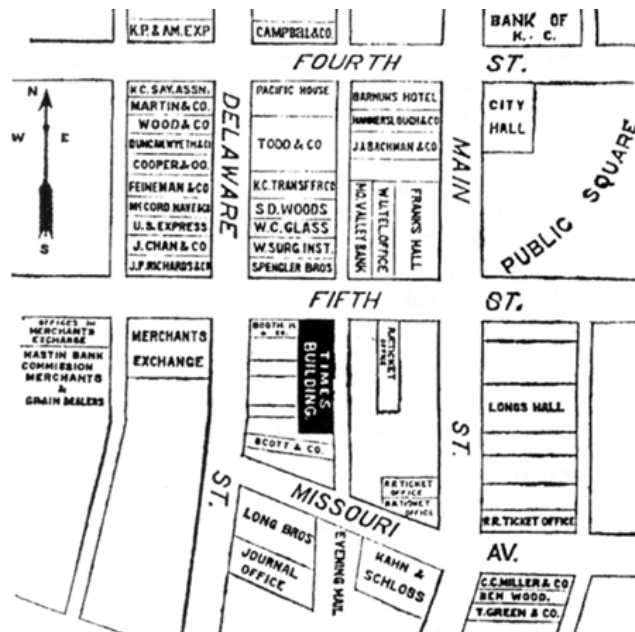
**Location:**

**Visitor Center Roof**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**V1**

## Site Orientation

**Media:**

- **View towards the roof of the proposed Visitor Center. might attempt to evoke the early bluffs with buildings perched atop them**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:**

Introduce visitors to what they can (and can't) do here.

**YEARNING:**

*What's where, now? What used to be here?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What's left? What got destroyed? What endured?*

**ADAPTING:**

*Why is this site still changing?*

The initial schematic Visitor Center design proposes a four-level visitor experience:

**V1 Roof Level = Vista**

**V2 Bluff Level = Visitor Services**

**V3 Main St = Research/Discovery**

**V4 Commercial St = The ToK Site**

From the upper levels it will be possible for visitors to gain views over the site.

Information rail graphics will point out the Hannibal Bridge, Gillis House site, current archaeological investigation sites, the railroads and river.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

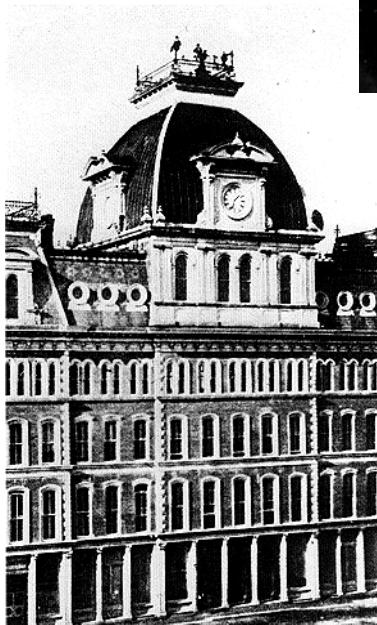
**Location:**

**Visitor Center Upper Level**

**Interpretive Element #**

**V2**

# Welcome, Orientation, Tickets

**Media:**

- **Orientation exhibit with images of ToK and animated diorama (with working scale train set) recreates 1860's site**
- **Photographic display of Lost Kansas City**
- **Touch screen kiosk shows animated site evolution and cross-sections of why and how the bluffs were moved**
- **Framed views from windows feature views to current archaeology investigation site(s) and to other site features**
- **Wayside Signage**
- **Audio Tour Node**

**The Story:**

The Visitor Center entry level will be a gathering and orientation space -- tours will begin here -- and as on the Entry Plaza, visitors will be shown how they can create an individually-tailored visit plan to match their own interest level. They will all learn what they can (and can't) do here.

*YEARNING: What's here for your eyes, your tummy, your mind?*

*SUCCEEDING: What can you do in one hour? In three hours? If you stay for a day or more?*

*ADAPTING: What are the different ways to enjoy this place?*

Upon entering the Visitor Center, guests are welcomed by live person, and invited to plan their site visit.

In addition to services, this floor presents a tangible, animated diorama of what ToK was like in mid 19th Century.

A collection of images will chronicle Lost Kansas City -- images of buildings now destroyed by the forces of man and nature.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Visitor Center Mezzanine**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**V3**

## Artifact Exhibit, and Virtual ToK

*It is possible to  
recreate a  
computer-simulation of  
what was once here,  
and is now gone.*

**Media:**

- **360° "Virtual Dig" theater. Visitors enter computer-recreation of several excavation sites at the Town of Kansas site, ie. a warehouse, train depot, or the original Shannon's drygoods store, and join in examining the very items retrieved from earlier digs!**

*What would it be like to be present in 1839 when 14 individuals formed a company to purchase 273 acres of ToK riverfront settlement for \$4,220?*

*Would you like to help, through visitor-controlled buttons, to lay out 86 lots on a plat, which would become the Town of Kansas?*

**The Story:**

From the upper level of the visitor center, visitors descend into a specially-designed "video immersion" theater completely surrounded by images. Visitors will be transported into the environments we will portray. The theater will be something of a "time machine" in that it will be able to recreate at actual size, the views unearthed by archaeology teams at this very site.

Through the use of computer animation we will be able to "morph" the scenes to move visitors from area to area, creating a virtual walk-through of the ToK site, as it might have appeared 150 years before. Visitors will be guided through this tour by an entertaining and knowledgeable scientist/host, who will describe the methods and careful procedures used in examining archaeological sites like the ToK. We should consider producing live presentations in this space, using historic impersonators.

This kind of interactive theater is already being adopted by forward-thinking learning centers, and should be incorporated into this landmark project.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning   ☒ Succeeding   ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Visitor Center Ground Level**

**Interpretive Element #**

**V4**

## Archaeology Exhibit; Access to Site

**Media:**

- **Visitors will be able to view a display of artifacts retrieved from the ToK site, and asked to participate in a "Speculation Game" to determine the origins or use of mystery objects**

- **Some examples:**

*Artifacts found at the site of the J&P Shannon Dry Goods Store, which carried both common and luxury items like boots and shoes, table linens, draperies, Italian silks, fabrics from France, England and Belgium. Preliminary archaeological examination of the store site has yielded thousands of artifacts including glass fragments from lamps goblets and windows, leather and cloth fragments of clothing, animal bones, coins, a bone toothbrush, ceramic smoking pipe bowls, and other treasures that might reveal what life was like at this site 150 years ago.*

**The Story:****YEARNING:**

*Why do archaeologists do what they do? What are they looking for?*

**SUCCEEDING:**

*What can you learn from an old bottle? A button? An old comb? Some bones? Part of a musical instrument? What mysteries can you solve?*

**ADAPTING:**

*What techniques must be used to find and retrieve artifacts? How can you be most accurate? Do the least damage?*

Following their overview of the site's history and some introduction into the scientific methods of examination and inquiry that can reveal the past, the lower level of the visitor center allows visitors to finally visit the site, itself. We think this preparation sequence is important in creating the proper "awe" and respect for an area that might otherwise be regarded as an abandoned lot. On this level, visitors can participate in a hands-on archaeology workshop using real tools and investigative methods of historians, anthropologists and archaeologists.

**Themes:**

☒ **Yearning**   ☒ **Succeeding**   ☒ **Adapting**

**Location:**

**Offsite - Early Initiative**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**Offsite 0.1**

## Website

**<WWW.  
townofkansas.  
com>**

**Media:**

- **Among the features of the site one might include:**
- **Site Maps Archive (Different years)**
- **Town of Kansas Timeline**
- **Project Schedule**
- **Project Staff and Advisors**
- **Acknowledgement of Sponsors**
- **Feedback to the Planners**

**The Story:**

The structure of the [www.townofkansas.com](http://www.townofkansas.com) website will be to describe...

1. WHAT'S HERE, NOW
2. WHAT WAS HERE, THEN
3. WHAT YOU CAN DO AT THE SITE
4. WHAT YOU CAN DO OFF-SITE

The schematic design will feature the three themes, Yearning, Succeeding and Adapting.

It should be simple and straightforward in its organization and access, relying upon the visual power of documentary images and non-bureaucratic prose style.

The expanded ToK website will provide public access to current planning efforts and provide an opportunity to exchange comments with project planners.

We propose to assist the project in translating the results of earlier research efforts, related studies and this consultant's report.

Cost of development might be defrayed by seeking pro-bono services from area media students or a local design firm.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Offsite - Early Initiative**

**Interpretive  
Element #**

**Offsite 0.2**

## Site Preview Visitor Center

**Media:**

- **We believe strongly that it would be advantageous to have a storefront exhibit near the site where plans could be exhibited and presented, and where additional public workshops and discussions could take place**
- **The temporary exhibit could include mechanisms for visitors to provide their own views suggestions, and for displaying those suggestions for park planners and others to see**

**The Story:**

In advance of the reopening of the developed Town of Kansas Core Area, it may be useful to establish a temporary Preview exhibit that acquaints would-be supporters and visitors with the proposed plans.

This "offshore" operation should be regarded as a "beachhead" and an early "friend-raising" public information and community relations effort.

It might be operated under a contractual agreement with a local educational group and might only be opened certain days and evenings of the week.

Staffing could include volunteers and community members willing to share their enthusiasm and interest in the site.

This facility might offer the opportunity to celebrate or commemorate appropriate activities relating to the project, such as a display of recovered artifacts, and/or acknowledgments of significant scholarship or research, exemplary educational programs or major patrons and benefactors.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Offsite - Early Initiative**

**Interpretive  
Element #** **Offsite**

**0.3**

## Site Preview Model

**Media:**

- **A large, 3-dimensional topographic scale-model would provide a very dramatic way for visitors to understand the ToK project. We propose that a simple, large scale, topographic "white" model be prepared and exhibited early in the planning process**

**The Story:**

Most people have a hard time understanding engineering and architectural plans.

Since it is so important that the Town of Kansas Core Area be well-linked the existing City Market neighborhood and attractions, we want to make certain people understand the how the new plans will affect them and the ToK site.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning   ☒ Succeeding   ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Offsite - Early Initiative**

**Interpretive  
Element #**   **Offsite**

**0.4**

## History Jukebox

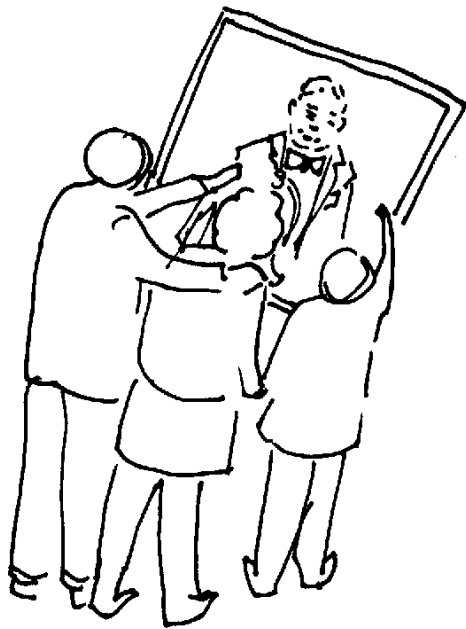
**Media:**

- **Viewers are invited to comment on what they observe, and these comments are recorded, compiled and if deemed of interest to the project staff, are included in subsequent History Jukebox presentations for others to see**

**The Story:**

The History jukebox is a powerful way to reach would-be project supporters in a dynamic interactive format.

Instead of a one-way monologue, it provides an opportunity for a "conversation" to take place between visitor and exhibit.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning   ☒ Succeeding   ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Offsite**

**Interpretive  
Element #**   **Offsite**

**0.5**

## Virtual ToK

**Media:**

- **The simulation can include accurate descriptions of the site at different time periods, almost working like a "time machine"**
- **Visitors could experience the site before, during, after development**

**The Story:**

An electronic representation of ToK can be created from historical resource materials.

Instead of a text-based or 2-dimensional static images, visitors could "walk-through" a computerized model.

The simulation can include accurate descriptions of the site at different time periods, almost working like a "time machine". Visitors could experience the site before, during, after development.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Offsite**

**Interpretive  
Element #** **Offsite**

**0.6**

## ToK CD-Rom

*The CD or video can provide a suitable vehicle for distributing plans and proposals, as well as educational source materials.*

**Media:**

- **We propose to coordinate the development, production and dissemination of multi-media interactive, cross-platform CD-Rom which might include a ToK overview; a 3-d walk-through preview of the park; historical narrative stories; images, simulation games; tips for visitors, teacher aids and curriculum links and public service announcements**

**The Story:**

The Virtual ToK model could be distributed via the internet, or packaged as a shrink-wrapped product as a component of an educational resource package.

**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Offsite**

**Interpretive  
Element #** **Offsite**

**0.7**

## Distance Learning

**Media:**

- **ToK Distance Learning Project could present an ideal opportunity to support students, educators and parents...**
- **Interacting with instructors and fellow students**
- **Using on-line materials**
- **Facilitating electronic mentoring relationships between professionals and students**
- **Support the community of researchers, teachers, and students conducting collaborative research in history and archaeology**

**The Story:**

Before the park opens and thereafter, internet-based teleconference linkages can be established with other museums, historic sites, classrooms, experts and project planners, by building an on-line community of support for ToK.



**Themes:**

☒ Yearning ☒ Succeeding ☒ Adapting

**Location:**

**Second Street and Main**

**Interpretive  
Element #** **Offsite**

**0.8**

## Research Institute/ Learning Center

**Media:**

- **In addition to the exhibits, displays, wayside signage, timelines, audio tours and live interpretation by guides and historic imposters, we see the opportunity to develop programs which require longer-term investigations at the site, and/or visits of longer duration, i.e. seminars and teacher training institutes, where workshops dealing with archaeological and historical research could be conducted**

**The Story:**

Our plan proposes the Town of Kansas become a unique hands-on learning environment, catering to a diverse audience which includes families, tourist groups, school groups and educators.

In addition to the exhibits, displays, wayside signage, timelines, audio tours and live interpretation by guides and historic imposters, we see the opportunity to develop programs which require longer-term investigations at the site, and/or visits of longer duration, i.e. seminars and teacher training institutes, where workshops dealing with archaeological and historical research could be conducted.

We hope a cooperative relationship can be negotiated with an existing non-profit organization to undertake such programs.